University of Alberta

German Philosophy and the Idea of India

by

Tarandeep Singh Kang

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

in

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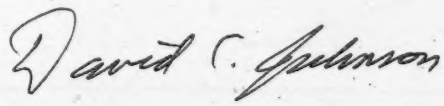

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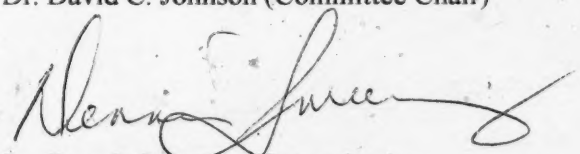

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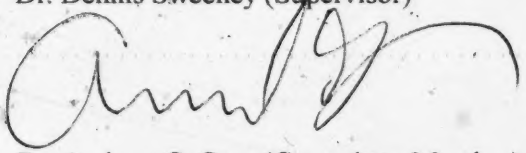

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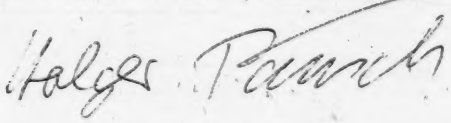

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Abstract

The unifying themes or commonalties of western Orientalist discourse have frequently been emphasized at the expense of the differences between European intellectuals' portrayals of the non-European world. But the diversity of such portrayals should not be downplayed. The representations of India in eighteenth and nineteenth-century German philosophy, for example, are noteworthy for their diversity. A study of German philosophers' representations of India sheds light upon the manner in which Herder, Kant, Schlegel, Hegel, Schelling, Schopenhauer, Marx, and Nietzsche situated German culture in relation to the so-called Orient. This analysis of cultural mapping and cultural geography reveals the range of German philosophers' perspectives on India and also discloses the existence of paradigmatic structures around which their representations of cultural contiguity and distance were organized.

Acknowledgement

The present work would not have been possible without the support of family and friends. First and foremost, I would like to thank my mother who offered me helpful suggestions on ways to improve my thesis. Her assistance and the encouragement of my father, my sister Veenu, and my grandfather Papaji have been invaluable. I also owe a special thanks to Angeles Espinaco-Virseda, who generously took the time to edit a rough draft of the present work. Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Dennis Sweeney, a teacher and a friend to whom I owe more than I can adequately convey.

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Part I

1. Cultural Geography

Debates about Orientalism within present-day historical scholarship frequently neglect to acknowledge the markedly divergent approaches different European national scholarships have traditionally taken towards different non-European cultures. And yet the divergences between the various branches of Orientalism are no less significant and illuminating than the similarities which scholars have tended to emphasize. An analysis of the representations of India found in modern German philosophy reveals the limitations of the notion of a unified Orientalist discourse. It also exposes the tensions, ambiguities, and contradictions of German intellectuals' perspectives on the non-European world. A fuller understanding of the cultural and intellectual foundations of these perspectives challenges older notions about the nature of Orientalist discourse and also contributes to our general understanding of cultural geography.

Cultural geography is constituted by the mapping of cultures. It is the spatialized representation of the imagined contiguity or distance of foreign cultures to our own, which itself is often imagined as possessing sharply defined boundaries. In investigating cultural geography, a chief object of study is the incongruity between cultural geography and physical geography. This incongruity is manifested when members of a culture experience a heightened sense of difference when faced with their own neighbours or, conversely, feel a stronger sense of kinship with more remote or even extinct populations. The formulation of such distinctions, and the resulting fluidity of the definition of culture itself, is integrally related to the privileging of specific cultural characteristics at the expense of others. The weight which is ascribed to these various characteristics (including language, religion, race, history) is instrumental in determining the manner in which the relationship between

peoples is represented. Such cultural mapping plays a decisive role in the formation of identities.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth century, European identities were decisively shaped by Europeans' interaction with and mapping of non-European cultures. But not all European nations subscribed to the same cultural map. In fact, even within different national scholarships, there were often incompatible representations of non-European peoples and their cultural proximity to Europe. Edward Said's compelling argument about the discursive structure of Orientalism emphasizes important unifying themes underlying Orientalist discourse; however, it neglects to address the divergences and diversity of European representations of the non-European world. The deficiencies of Said's position as articulated in *Orientalism* need to be identified because his thesis has had such a profound influence on the study of western representations of the Other.

Said defines Orientalism not simply as the European study of the East, but as a scholarly discourse "for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient". Furthermore, Said contends that the very existence of Orientalism relies upon the "positional superiority" of western civilization in its dealings with the East.[1] Said delineates the scope of Orientalism by focusing upon specific national scholarships at the expense of others. He defines Orientalism as primarily "a British and French cultural enterprise".[2] Those nations which had less well developed contacts in the East, such as Germany, were not fully Orientalist because the interplay between politics and scholarship (in relation to Asian nations) was less pronounced. And because *Orientalism* is a study of the manner in which imperialistic agenda and scholarly pursuits have historically influenced each other, it

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[1]Edward W. Said, Orientalism (New York, New York: Random House Inc., 1994), pp. 3-7.
[2]Ibid., p. 4.

does not fully examine German scholarship's more nebulous relationship to the East, as Said himself acknowledges. However, Said still understands German scholarship's treatment of so-called Oriental cultures to be complicit with British and French enterprises. He states that German Orientalism's contribution was "to refine and elaborate techniques whose application was to texts, myths, ideas, and languages almost literally gathered from the Orient by imperial Britain and France."[3] Thus, in spite of producing a voluminous body of literature, German Orientalism is reduced by Said to an ancillary position. But to confine the work of German scholars to merely refining and elaborating "techniques" is not just to underrate but to misrepresent the achievements of German scholarship. German intellectuals did not passively receive British and French representations of the Orient, nor did they confine themselves to technical innovation. They produced their own highly original representations of the Orient which were often in stark contrast to those of the British and French. Said's dismissal of German scholarship in *Orientalism* obscures the extent of the contrast.

Even in his otherwise compelling essay *Orientalism Reconsidered*, Said explicitly defends his "exclusion of German Orientalism" and remarks that "no one has given any reason for me to have *included*" a study of it.[4] Unfortunately, Said refuses to entertain the possibility that the differences between different European "Orientalisms" may be as consequential as the similarities. If this be the case, then Said's notion of a unified Orientalist discourse may be in danger. In emphasizing the manner in which British and French Orientalists "othered" the Orient, Said has neglected to account for other processes at work in the European discourse on the East. Some of these processes include assimilation, incorporation, hybridization, and

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[3] Ibid., p. 19.
[4] Said, Reflections on Exile and Other Essays (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2001), pp. 198-199.

idealization. Assimilation refers to the downplaying or even the effacing of differences between cultures; incorporation is the discovery or invention of links between cultures; hybridization is the disruption of notions of cultural purity or insularity; and idealization consists of the exaltation of foreign cultures. In addition to the process of "othering", which occupies Said, all of these processes were important in the formulation of western intellectuals' representations of the Orient.

Said's neglect of these processes is a regrettable omission. It is partly a consequence of his restrictive definition of Orientalism as "a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident.'"[5] An alternative vision of Orientalism is offered by Raymond Schwab. Schwab argues that Orientalism did not manufacture or reinforce the divide between Orient and Occident but, on the contrary, broke it down. He writes that "the effect of oriental studies was to undermine the wall raised between the two cultures".[6] Said is, of course, well aware of Schwab's position. He refers to Schwab in *Orientalism*, and he has even provided a fine preface to the English translation of Schwab's magnum opus, *The Oriental Renaissance*. And yet, even in his preface to Schwab's work, Said does not engage Schwab's thesis directly or attempt to delimit the extent of its validity. If Said were to do so, it would certainly clarify his position.

The primary problem with Said's analysis of Orientalism, however, is his tendency to raise the particular to the level of the universal. On the basis of his study of a particular strand of Orientalism (the British/French study of the Arab world), Said makes broad generalizations about European representations of the non-

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[5]Said, Orientalism, p. 2.
[6]Raymond Schwab, The Oriental Renaissance: Europe's Discovery of India and the East, 1680-1880, translated by Gene Patterson-Black and Victor Reinking (New York, New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), p. 1.

European world. In so doing, he avoids the most decisive question, "who is studying whom?" To be more specific, "which European national scholarship is studying which non-European culture?" It is imperative to acknowledge the differences between European national scholarships and the differences in the ways in which various non-European cultures are represented by these scholarships. Once this is done, the limitations of Said's conception of Orientalism become apparent.

German Orientalism must cease to be viewed as a mere appendage to British Orientalism; it must be investigated as an object worthy of study in its own right. But even more recent scholarly work has often failed to treat it as such. Kamakshi P. Murti's quasi-Saidian reading of German representations of India silences German Orientalism's peculiarities while placing excessive weight on its commonalties with British Orientalism. Murti seeks to establish German scholarship's "collusion in colonialism and imperialism in India".[7] Taking up Said's notion of "intellectual authority", Murti contends that by exercising intellectual authority over India, German scholars were guilty of furthering European imperialism. She writes, "the operative word is here "authority," which does away with the myth of German involvement in India as a disinterested academic venture."[8] Of course, the German *interest* in India was not "disinterested"; but this is merely to utter a tautology. On the basis of the existence of a German interest in India, to deduce that it is identical to a British interest in India is problematic. The paramount question relates to what precisely these interests were, the degree and manner in which they corresponded and differed. Murti's appeal to "intellectual authority" advances her case little. The production of all knowledge relies on some form of "intellectual authority" insofar as

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[7]Kamakshi P. Murti, India: The Seductive and Seduced "Other" of German Orientalism (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2000), p. 5.
[8]Ibid., p. 5.

knowledge is integrally related to power, but "intellectual authority" is by no means innately imperialistic.

The examples Murti adduces of the German intellectual involvement in imperialism in India are limited. She addresses a small and rather insubstantial segment of German scholarship and takes the part which she is examining for the whole. Her monograph is lacking in the encyclopedic range which distinguishes *Orientalism*. Her most convincing account of the German contribution to British imperialism deals with German missionaries in India, but to confuse German missionary work with German scholarship is farfetched.

Susanne Zantop provides a more compelling argument than Murti about the nature of German imperialism. Because Germany was relatively late in its acquisition of colonies, when it began its colonizing drive it was already largely excluded from Asia which had been carved up by the British, the French, and the Dutch. And while Germany had imperialist ambitions, no less than its European neighbours, it was forced to direct its desires for conquest elsewhere. Thus, South America, and not "the Orient or Africa", was the region which inspired "fantasies of national renewal through conquest".[9]

India was of little political concern to Prussia or the smaller German states, though it occupied the imagination of several German intellectuals. A recognition of the fact that the political position of Germany vis-à-vis India was unlike Britain's helps to explain the variance between British and German Indology. The lack of success in colonizing Asia proved to be instrumental in shaping the cultural-mapping of German intellectuals. India's distance lent enchantment. And the further away it was in reality, the closer it was dreamt to be in the German imagination. On the

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[9]Susanne Zantop, Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family, and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770-1870 (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1997), p. 44.

other hand, the constant presence of India in the political planning of the British was inimical to both idealization and sympathy. Trading relations between colony and metropole diminished the distance between Britain and India while simultaneously heightening the sense of difference.

The importance of such geographical circumstances in defining culture has been perspicaciously explicated by Larry Wolff in *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment*. Wolff draws a direct comparison between the manner in which European scholars treated Said's "Orient" and the way they represented Russia, Poland, and the Balkans. He describes how western intellectuals depicted the moral habits, political institutions, and sexual practices of the Slavic people in a fashion reminiscent of their characterizations of Orientals. Wolff relates that German intellectuals' treatment of the Poles was particularly harsh.[10] He attributes the intensity of this reaction to the geographical closeness of Germans and Poles. The possibility of similarities between Germans and their "uncivilized" neighbours aroused the anxiety of German intellectuals by challenging their notions of their position in the civilized world. Wolff explains how the anxiety of the German idealist philosopher Fichte expressed itself in a fastidious disdain for Polish women, whom Fichte saw as "slovenly", "dirty", and possessing a less satiable sexual appetite than German women.[11] The example is illuminating insofar as it illustrates how the proximity between peoples does not necessarily lead to feelings of fraternity but can, on the contrary, result in the most intense animosity.

Apart from describing the interaction between geography and the representations of other cultures, Wolff more specifically relates how European definitions of the civilized world underwent a transformation during the

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[10]Larry Wolff, Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1994), p. 333.
[11]Ibid., p. 335.

Enlightenment. He argues that during the Renaissance "the fundamental conceptual division of Europe was between the South and the North", but by the time of the Enlightenment the division was drawn according to a distinction between western and eastern Europe.[12]

The manner in which such divisions between cultures are constructed and broken down is an instrumental part of cultural mapping. This mapping receives articulation at the nodal points of popular and intellectual discourse on culture. In the nineteenth-century discourse of German intellectuals, these cultural nodes included language, race, religion, aesthetics, political theory, and theories of historical development. Each of these topics is referred to as a node because they did not exist in isolation but were the points of intersection where the defining features of German culture and non-German cultures were generated. In investigating German philosophers' reflections on foreign cultures, it becomes clear that there exist certain paradigmatic relationships between the various cultural nodes. An analysis of the structure of these paradigms elucidates the sources of German philosophers' representations of India.

2. Origins and Exemplars

The eighteenth-century quest for origins and exemplars manifested itself in an increasing interest in both Oriental cultures and the Greco-Roman World. Though the modern disciplines of Orientalism and Classics ultimately took very different paths, they both received an impetus from this quest. Both disciplines were also instrumental in shaping modern European cultural geography. They not only offered information about the past but even pointed the way to the future by suggesting that other cultures could possibly serve as models of emulation (aesthetically, politically,

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[12] Ibid., p. 4.

or spiritually). These two disciplines were supplemented by the fields of natural history and anthropology, which provided a scientific foundation to the quest for human origins and offered a method of scientifically classifying different ethnic populations. The confluence of these scholarly developments in the late eighteenth century was integral in the formation of a burgeoning Indophilia in Europe.

During this time period, German intellectuals, along with their counterparts elsewhere in Europe, developed a scholarly interest in the customs, beliefs, and institutions of non-European peoples.[13] The interest constitutes one of the defining aspects of the Enlightenment.[14] Spurred on by the dissemination of travel-literature and accounts of foreign cultures, Enlightenment thinkers raised questions which had only been feebly addressed before (if at all). These questions pertained to European identity, to racial taxonomy, and to the definition of man. The comparative study of different cultures at times confirmed the belief in European superiority but it also introduced the disruptive notion of cultural relativism. Generated by increasing contacts with other cultures (primarily through trade), the notion of cultural relativism was frequently employed as a means of critiquing traditional European mores, practices, and institutions. This is particularly evident in the writings of the French *philosophes*, as exhibited in Montesquieu's *Persian Letters*, where condescension for the East is mixed with criticism of the West.

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[13]Information about India was, in fact, available to German intellectuals prior to the eighteenth century, as shown by Gita Dharampal-Frick. Dharampal-Frick's work addresses a serious omission in the historiography on Orientalism, which has tended to neglect the early modern period. The travel reports and other sources of information about India she examines are of interest not only to early modernists but to historians interested in the late eighteenth century as well since many of these accounts were consulted by later German scholars, including Herder, Goethe, and the Romantics. Unfortunately, an assessment of the relationship between early-modern and modern German representations of India lies outside the scope of the present work. For further information see Gita Dharampal-Frick, Indien im Spiegel deutscher Quellen der Frühen Neuzeit (1500-1750) (Tübingen, Germany; Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1994).

[14]Dorinda Outram, The Enlightenment (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 63-65.

The Enlightenment attack on religious orthodoxy was another consequence of cultural relativism. As information about non-European religions became available, the veridicality of Christianity became a point of dispute. Ironically, the debate received an impetus from the accounts of other religions given by proselytizing Christian missionaries in foreign lands. Once the infallibility of scripture was called into question, there was a reassessment of European belief-systems and ideals. Biblical accounts of the past became an object of contention. The possibility that the Bible did not provide the only viable account of human origins led to both scholarly inquiry and romantic speculation about human origins, as is evinced by the emergence of the theory of the polygenesis of races (a theory embraced by Voltaire), which contradicted *Genesis*' monogenetic version of human origins.[15]

In investigating human origins, many Enlightenment figures felt that the ongoing encounters with contemporary "primitive" peoples also gave insights into the state of European man in the distant past. The idea rested on the assumption that less advanced civilizations represented an early form of human development and could consequently provide information about the "childhood" of Europe and European man. The idea contributed to the Rousseauvian interest in "the noble savage", which first found expression in the 1750s. Rousseau himself believed that "the Caribs, of all existing peoples, are the people that until now has wandered the least from the state of nature".[16] For Rousseau, a better understanding of the modern savage, and by extension the original man, not only provided information about

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[15]George L. Mosse, Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism (New York, New York: Howard Fertig Inc., 1978), p. 33.

[16]Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Discourse on the Origin of Inequality, translated by Donald A. Cress (Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett Publishing Company, 1992), p. 40.

human history but also had important political implications insofar as it provided a possible solution to the political problem of "the origin of moral inequality".[17]

A fascination with Europe's childhood thus proved to be decisive in shaping European self-definition and European representations of alien cultures. It introduced a historical dimension, which was previously lacking, to European scholarship. This historicism became increasingly pronounced in the later Enlightenment and especially following the Enlightenment's wake when static conceptions of man came to be supplanted by those which emphasized the role of historical or evolutionary development.

The emerging search for cultural, historical, and racial antecedents marks a landmark in European cultural geography. European intellectuals began to formulate increasingly elaborate systems of cultural classification and racial taxonomy. Cultural geography adopted the dress of scientific inquiry. But in scientifically establishing the relationship of different cultures, there was by no means unanimity among scholars. Different national scholarships within Europe proved to be amenable to divergent cultural maps; moreover, within some of these national scholarships, the internal diversity of these cultural maps was significant.

But despite such differences, a number of German, French, and even British intellectuals were attracted to India early on by virtue of its reputed antiquity. It was in the 1770s, the time when the French astronomer Jean-Sylvain Bailly published his letters expressing his theories on human origins and the origins of the sciences, that serious scholarly inquiry into the relationship between modern Europe and ancient India began. The attraction here can partially be attributed to the general interest in all exotic lands and cultures which so characterizes the Enlightenment.[18] But more

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[17] Ibid., p. 14.
[18] Outram, p. 70.

specifically and more consequentially, the French interest in India was generated by the scholarly search for the origins of human culture. In his letters, Bailly propounded the theory that humanity survived the deluge, recounted in *Genesis*, on the peaks of the Himalayas; the survivors then settled in northern India, where they subsequently made lasting and original contributions to human knowledge.[19] On the basis of information supplied to him in his correspondence with Bailly, Voltaire concurred with the French astronomer that the science of astronomy had originated in India.[20] Voltaire also speculated on the relationship between Biblical accounts of the past and Indian history, even supplying an etymology to prove that the name "Adam" was derived from Sanskrit, thereby suggesting that the Garden of Eden was originally located in India.[21]

Such fanciful speculations were not limited to the French but found resonance among a handful of early British Indologists. John Z. Holwell, who served as Bengal's governor and survived the Black Hole of Calcutta, theorized that India's cosmogonic system was borrowed by the Egyptians, the Greeks, and the Romans.[22] And, in 1782, the scholar and traveler William Macintosh wrote that India was "the mother of science and art".[23] However, initially favourable impressions of India were quickly submerged by more negative ones. The condescension with which Britain ultimately came to treat India was an almost inevitable consequence of the asymmetrical relationship of power between conqueror and conquered. The British

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[19]Hanna Franziska Augstein, "From the land of the Bible to the Caucasus and beyond: the shifting ideas of the geographical origin of human kind," in W. Ernst and B. Harris (eds.), Race, Science, and Medicine, 1700-1960 (New York, New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 71.

[20]Despite his interest in India as a centre of origins, Voltaire was more intrigued by the history, customs, and institutions of China than those of India.

[21]Leon Poliakov, The Aryan Myth: A History of Racist and Nationalist Ideas in Europe, translated by Edmund Howard (New York, New York: Basic Books Inc., 1974), p. 185. Decades afterwards, in the 1820s, the French historian Jules Michelet praised India as "*the womb of the world*" whence all the peoples and religions of mankind had sprung. Ibid., p. 199.

[22]A. Leslie Willson, A Mythical Image: The ideal of India in German Romanticism (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1964), p. 24.

[23]Ibid., p. 25.

had a vested interest in downplaying and denigrating the past cultural achievements of their most prized colony, boosting feelings of cultural superiority at home while inhibiting the formation of a nationalist movement in India itself. Naturally, then, India could never serve the British as an exemplar; rather, it itself was represented as desperately requiring British reform.

The distinction between the position of British and German intellectuals is pronounced. As already stated, it was Germany's distance from India, its lack of political, economic, and social ties, which facilitated the romanticization of India. In Bailly's scheme, postdiluvian civilization emerged out of the Himalayas, but some German scholars went so far as to situate the primeval paradise itself, which antedated the Flood by millennia, at the base of these very same mountains. Even before Sanskrit-studies were well-developed in Germany, the notion of Eden in India was already taken up by a few German linguists. The philologist and scholar of Hebrew Johann David Michaelis contended that Eden was located in the vicinity of Kashmir and Tibet.[24] And the grammarian and lexicographer Johann Christoph Adelung identified Kashmir as the garden of Eden.[25]

In the early writings of the Germanic Romantics, the depiction of India as the land of human origins was coupled with a longing to return to the pristine condition enjoyed by Edenic man, a longing expressed most forcefully in the writings of Novalis, Jean Paul, and Friedrich Schlegel. With Schlegel, India was no longer of interest merely because of its antiquity but also because it was an exemplar and source of inspiration. In inventing his Indian ideal, Schlegel simultaneously criticized German scholars for placing too much emphasis on the Classical World and for neglecting the study of eastern civilization. Assessing the Germans' slavish

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[24]Augstein, p. 67.
[25]Poliakov, p. 190.

attachment to ancient Greece, he decried the negative consequences of the "almost wilful devotion to classical learning", and urged his contemporaries to return to the "sole source of lofty 'truth" which could be found in eastern literature.[26] He imagined that the European study of India would result in a cultural renaissance bringing "vigour to the intellect", "feeling to the soul", and instilling "new and glorious life" into art.[27] In a similar vein, Schopenhauer predicted, inaccurately, that Sanskrit literature would have as influential an impact on nineteenth-century European thought as the literature of the Greeks had in the early modern period.[28] Schopenhauer hoped that it would lead to an invigoration of western metaphysics and a spiritual rejuvenation in Europe. Even in the late nineteenth century, India was looked to by German intellectuals as a potential source for German cultural and spiritual rebirth.[29]

But, naturally, many German scholars were indifferent or even antipathetic to India. In the early 1800s, at a time when the Romantic fascination with India was at its height, the classicist Karl Ottfried Müller lamented the excessive attention devoted to the Orient, which he feared would encroach on the primacy of Greece.[30] In addition to many classicists, adherents of the modern theory of progress, led by G.W.F. Hegel, formed another formidable scholarly bloc in opposition to the Indophiles.

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[26]Friedrich von Schlegel, "On the Language and Wisdom of the Indians," in E.J. Millington (ed.), The Aesthetic and Miscellaneous Works of Friedrich von Schlegel (London, England: George Bell and Sons, 1900), p. 526.

[27]Ibid., p. 526.

[28]Moira Nicholls, "The Influences of Eastern Thought on Schopenhauer's Doctrine of the Thing-In-Itself," in Christopher Janaway (ed.), The Cambridge Companion to Schopenhauer (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 180.

[29]Following the Franco-Prussian War and the formation of the new Reich in 1871, the English statesman and Indologist Sir Henry Maine remarked that "a nation has been born out of Sanskrit". Navaratna S. Rajaram, The Politics of History: Aryan Invasion Theory and The Subversion of Scholarship (New Delhi, India: Voice of India, 1995), p. 102.

[30]Martin Bernal, Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization- Volume I: The Fabrication of Ancient Greece 1785-1985 (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1987), pp. 308-310.

Such lack of consensus on India is to be found throughout nineteenth-century German intellectual discourse; representations of India run the gamut from exceeding veneration to utter contempt. And this is precisely what makes German Indology such a fruitful object of study. The comparative absence of discursive unity in German representations of India belies Said's image of a unified Orientalist discourse and forces us to acknowledge the complexities of European representations of the East.

A study of the representations of India found in modern German philosophy provides insights into the different ways in which German philosophers went about establishing the relationship of their own culture to others. The eight philosophers dealt with in the present work (Herder, Kant, Schlegel, Hegel, Schelling, Schopenhauer, Marx, Nietzsche) all offered different perspectives on India. An exploration of the foundations of these perspectives discloses the existence of certain paradigms which informed the cultural-geographical visions of the aforementioned philosophers.

Part II

3. Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803)

The Edenic image of India found fertile soil in Germany and was taken up by Herder, the chief theoretician of the *Sturm und Drang* movement. His idealistic portrayal of India provided a vision which later Romantics would draw upon again and again. Though his ideas were naturally refashioned by his philosophical and spiritual descendants, his vision of an Edenic India proved to be surprisingly resilient. Even after the peak period of German Romanticism (roughly 1790-1810), India was still looked upon by German poets as a source of inspiration and continued to be depicted as a land of enchantment. Reflections of Herder's vision can even be found in the early twentieth century in the works of German neo-Romantic writers such as Herman Hesse.

Once a pupil of Kant and Hamann, Herder quickly distinguished himself by formulating a philosophy of man which selectively borrowed from the theories of both.[31] At the behest of Kant, Herder immersed himself at an early age in the writings of Rousseau and the Scottish Enlightenment. These writings were to have a decisive influence on Herder even after his falling-out with Kant. But while his thought bears the imprint of the ideals and methods upheld by the Enlightenment, his sensitivity to the importance of historical development and his denial of absolute objective values sets him apart from his contemporaries, including Kant and the French *philosophes*, such as Voltaire and Montesquieu.

According to Isaiah Berlin, Herder's three original contributions to eighteenth-century thought were his notions of "populism, expressionism, and

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[31] John H. Zammito, Kant, Herder, and the Birth of Anthropology (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 2002), p. 7

pluralism".[32] Of these three, the last proved to be of the greatest significance in shaping Herder's representations of India. Berlin describes Herder's pluralism as going beyond a simple embrace of cultural multiplicity and extending to a denial of the commensurability of different societies' values.[33] Along with his repudiation of an absolute value standard, Herder also rejected the idea of a "*Favoritvolk*" (a people privileged or favoured above all others). Celebrating cultural diversity, Herder simultaneously critiqued the Enlightenment tendency to efface cultural differences and to uphold a timeless, ahistorical image of man. Despite its apparent universality, Herder recognized the parochialism of the Enlightenment image of man and developed his own contrasting idea of humanity ("*Humanität*"). His idea of *Humanität* is linked to the notion of continual human activity, of the development of man's potential through increasing diversification. Herder does not put forward a single ideal type, to which all men ought to approximate; rather, *Humanität* is the celebration of the wealth of different types and the richness of cultural variation.[34]

In Herder's *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man* (a work of encyclopedic proportions written over an eight year period between 1784 and 1791), Herder provided a comprehensive account of the variety of the different cultures and peoples of the world. Most of his information on non-European cultures, including India, was derived from travel literature and quasi-anthropological writings of other European intellectuals. Though Herder was more of a synthesizer of knowledge rather than a discoverer, *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man* testifies to his originality and creativity in arranging and interpreting data. It is also a testament

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[32]Isaiah Berlin, Three Critics of the Enlightenment: Vico, Hamann, Herder (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 170.
[33]Ibid., pp. 176-177.
[34]Johann Gottfried von Herder, On World History: An Anthology, edited by Hans Adler and Ernest A. Menze, translated by Ernest A. Menze with Michael Palma (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe Inc., 1997), pp. 99-104. Herder's idea of *Humanität* receives its most lucid and concise exposition in his brief essay, "On the Character of Humankind".

to his *Einfühlungsvermögen*; his accounts of other cultures may not be free of prejudices, yet they remain illustrative of his capacity to empathize with his objects of study.

His depiction of India, however, is rather singular insofar as Herder went beyond showing empathy to showing "extreme reverence and adulation" for India.[35] In describing India, its institutions, customs, and people, Herder relied heavily on the accounts of European travelers such as Francois Bernier and William Macintosh. Both men provided him with valuable information about contemporary India, but he accepted their judgments only selectively. For example, Herder rejected Bernier's negative assessment of the Brahmins, but he took Bernier's description of the more positive features of India to heart and uncritically adopted his vision of the province of Kashmir.

On Bernier's authority, Herder portrays Kashmir in terms which are almost utopian.[36] He effusively rhapsodizes about the beauty and virtues of the province. He describes it as an "Eden", "a hidden paradise" resting at the foot of "the mountains of innocence".[37] And according to Herder, the beauty of the Indian landscape is mirrored by its people. Here, Herder anticipates a theme of later Romanticism: the importance of landscape as a reflection of the soul of a people. Consequently, not only does Herder praise the natural scenery of Kashmir but he also comments upon the physical attractiveness of the Kashmiris, identifying its women as often being "models of beauty".[38]

And though the inhabitants of Kashmir are said to surpass the rest of India in their attractiveness and their intelligence, Herder favourably describes the

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[35]Willson, p. 49.
[36]Pranabendra Nath Ghosh, Johann Gottfried Herder's Image of India (Santiniketan, India: Visva Bharati Research Publications, 1990), p. 31.
[37]Herder, Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man, translated by T. Churchill (New York, New York: Bergman Publishers, 1800), p. 141.
[38]Ibid., p. 141.

appearance of the Indians in general. He depicts them as "straight, slender, and elegant", with well-shaped limbs, long fingers, and a gait which he finds "in the highest degree graceful and attractive".[39] He contrasts the shape of their thighs and legs with those of the Asians dwelling to the north-east. Unlike the short and thick legs of their neighbours ("like those of apes"), the Indians possess legs which are "lengthened" and more human.[40] The invasion of such subjective aesthetic considerations into discussions of ethnicity is a prominent feature of Herder's anthropology, in which the purported beauty or ugliness of a people is naively taken to be indicative of its spirit.

Herder's division of peoples itself combines racial, geographical, and aesthetic elements. The sixth book of *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man* divides humanity into six groups: Americans, Africans, inhabitants of the tropical islands, those peoples who live in the vicinity of the north pole, those who dwell to the east of the Himalayas, and those who are the most beautifully formed ("des Erdstrichs schöngebildeter Völker").[41] This nebulous last group consists of Indians, Persians, Greeks and other Europeans. By placing Indians and Europeans together in the same category, Herder challenged the belief that Europeans constituted a separate and distinct racial group. But his taxonomy was based as much on aesthetic as on scientific principles, as is attested by Herder's judgment that the peoples living in the most temperate climates are the most attractive. And so, because of the distance of the peoples of northern Europe from the temperate zone, Herder maintained that northern Europeans, though well-formed, were yet less attractive

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[39] Ibid., p. 142.
[40] Ibid., p. 142.
[41] Herder, Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit (Darmstadt, Germany: Joseph Melzer Verlag, 1966), p. 160.

than Kashmiris and Greeks. Herder, however, consoled himself with the observation that, "At least we are thus no antipodes to the land of beauty."[42]

Herder's aesthetic judgment is at odds with nearly all later nineteenth-century racial theories, in which the attractiveness of northern Europeans was accepted as evidence of Anglo-Saxon superiority. By granting physical beauty to non-Europeans, although only to a limited number, Herder was placing these people closer to Europe, a placement that disrupted the dominant cultural-geographical map which separated and privileged Europeans on aesthetic grounds.

Herder's description of the Indian readily reveals his own aesthetic prejudice that character is externally manifested through outward physical characteristics. In consonance with their "delicate lineaments of beauty", the Hindus are, says Herder, "the gentlest race of mankind", endowed with the highest moral principles.[43] He even claims that compared to Indians, Europeans often appear to be "beastly, drunken, or mad".[44] The disparaging description is particularly directed at those Europeans who engage in the spoliation of other lands, an act for which Herder expresses disgust.

His abhorrence of rapaciousness is evident in his recital of the pains which Europeans have caused the natives of Peru, where he mixes a tender sympathy with a fierce indignation.[45] Despite his many own prejudices, Herder generally displayed great sensitivity to the sufferings which indigenous populations experienced at the hands of Europeans. He was genuinely aggrieved by man's inhumanity to man in whatever form it appeared. An aversion to cruelty is also present in his few criticisms of Indian morality. Though Herder was full of praise for the morality of

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[42]Herder, Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man, p. 143.
[43]Ibid., pp. 141-142.
[44]Ibid., p. 307.
[45]Ibid., p. 159.

the Brahmins, he expressed disturbance at the practice of sati and at the inhumane treatment of the untouchable class or pariahs.[46]

But Herder's recognition of the inequities in modern Indian society did not dampen his enthusiasm. He continued to associate India with gentleness and innocence. His depiction of an Edenic India is all the more noteworthy because it does not merely refer to the condition of India in antiquity but is intended to describe India in its current or at least relatively recent state. The German Romantics after Herder fantasized about an India which had long since passed; present India enticed them only insofar as it contained the vestiges of an ancient culture. But because Herder was concerned with the present-state of India as much as with its past, he took a greater political interest in contemporary events in India than did the Romantics who came after him. The childlike innocence of the Indians of his own day, which he found so attractive, moved him to lament their conquest by Europeans.[47]

The description of Indians as innocent children may appear to be rife with condescension, but it should be recalled that similar descriptions were made by German scholars regarding the ancient Greeks. Herder's identification of the modern Indians as a race of uncorrupted, beautiful children is actually strikingly close to Winckelmann's description of the Greeks in antiquity. And his vision of the paradisiacal province of Kashmir is almost a mirror-image, an eastern counterpart to the western pastoral ideal of Arcadia. Geographically, both regions occupy the thin latitudinal band within which Herder believed that the most beautiful people lived and evolved.[48]

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[46] Ibid., p. 309.
[47] Ibid., p. 310.
[48] Ibid., p. 143.

Herder's study of the interaction between geography and race was not simply confined to racial aesthetics but also encompassed the subject of racial and cultural antecedents. And though he considered himself to be a Christian, Herder did not believe that biblical scripture contained the answer to the question of human origins. He insisted that the writings of the ancient Hebrews were useful for providing information regarding the history of the Levant and neighbouring areas but could not be extended to encompass all of human history; hence, his criticism of the Noachian genealogy and of the use of the deluge for purposes of dating.[49]

Herder's interest in origins led him much further eastwards than the Levant, particularly in his investigations into the migration patterns of peoples during antiquity; he conceived of India, especially northern India, as an important originary point of human culture. Like Bailly, he considered the Himalayas to be humanity's original homeland, and he believed that "Europe was supplied with both men and animals chiefly from Asia".[50] The belief in an invasion or gradual infiltration of Europe by native Asians was later adopted by German philologists, who substantiated the theory with evidence from comparative linguistics. Herder speculated that the beginnings of language were to be looked for in India.[51] It was a prescient idea considering that Sanskrit-studies did not even exist in continental Europe at the time when Herder made the pronouncement. Herder died before the explosion of Sanskrit studies in Germany and did not live to see the philological developments which would build on his early speculations. Yet through his influence on Romantic philologists, such as the Schlegel brothers, his ideas on language would come to exercise an immense influence on nineteenth-century German scholarship.

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[49]Herder, On World History, pp. 64-65.
[50]Herder, Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man, p. 263.
[51]Charles W.J. Withers, "Geography, Enlightenment, and the Paradise Question," in David N. Livingstone and Charles W.J. Withers (eds.), Geography and Enlightenment (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1999), p. 79.

In one of his earliest writings, *Essay on the Origin of Language*, Herder claimed that the "Invention of language is as natural to man as it is to him that he is man."[52] Herder's simple formula provides the most lucid equation of language with humanity. It is an idea which places language at the heart of human existence. Looking towards Condillac but also going beyond him, Herder denied the rationalist argument which placed thought before language; for Herder, the two were inseparable.[53] The positive reception of Herder's theory of language among philologists was decisive in shaping German Indology. The German fascination with Sanskrit, which initiated the fervor for India, owed much to his idea that the culture and thought of a people is embodied in its language.

Herder himself never learnt Sanskrit, but following the publication of *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man*, he became better acquainted with Indian aesthetic productions through the European translations of Sanskrit works. He read from the *Asiatick Researches* and other British sources of information on India. And in his writings from the 1790s, he shows a significant knowledge about Indian art and religion, particularly in his essay *On Monuments of the Distant Past*, which investigates the proper method of studying antiquities.[54]

Herder also had a predilection for Indian literature though the number of Sanskrit works available in European translations during his lifetime was meagre. He was particularly responsive to *Sakuntala*, one of the great dramas of the Indian poet Khalidasa. *Sakuntala* was originally translated into Latin and English by the Indologist Sir William Jones. In 1791, two years following Jones' rendering, Georg Forster provided a German version of *Sakuntala*, which caused a small sensation in

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[52]Herder, "Essay on the Origin of Language," in Peter H. Salus (ed.), On Language: Plato to von Humboldt (New York, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston Inc., 1969), p. 158.
[53]Robert E. Norton, Herder's Aesthetics and the European Enlightenment (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 99-100.
[54]Herder, On World History, pp. 63-80.

Germany but a much bigger one than produced in Jones' native-land, England.[55] Shortly after Forster's translation became available, Schiller wrote to Wilhelm von Humboldt of his excitement over the play, exclaiming that the depiction of the heroine, Sakuntala, was unmatched by any Greek drama's depiction of a female character.[56] Goethe even considered producing a German adaptation of the play. Though he was never able to do so, the first scene of *Sakuntala* yet served as the model for the prologue of *Faust*.[57] Herder shared in and spurred on his younger contemporaries' enthusiasm. The play incited him to take a yet greater interest in India, culminating in his publication of a collection of poems, *Thoughts of a few Brahmins*. Such enthusiasm was sustained until the end of his life, in the last year of which he even supplied the second edition of Forster's *Sakuntala* with a laudatory preface.[58]

Because of his affection for Indian culture, Herder tended to stress the existence of racial, historical, and linguistic ties between Indians and Europeans. Of course, Herder was also always conscious of the separation between cultures. In fact, in his mapping of cultures, every culture is deemed distinct and irreducibly different, even though the manner in which Herder determines these distinctions is never clearly formulated. Thus, his notion of irreducible difference is in continual tension with his objection to fixed taxonomies. But the emphasis on difference is rarely accompanied by a strict cultural hierarchy. It is Herder's respect for and joy in diversity and an opposition to uniformity which undergird his representations of all cultures, including Indian culture. Unfortunately, his idea of the *Volksgeist* was

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[55] Willson, p. 47.
[56] Ibid., pp. 72-73.
[57] Arthur F.J. Remy, The Influence of India and Persia on the Poetry of Germany (New York, New York: AMS Press Inc., 1966), p. 20.
[58] Walter Leifer provides a good overview of the reception of Sakuntala among German intellectuals in his chapter on "The German Shakuntala Experience". See Walter Leifer, India and the Germans: 500 Years of Indo-German Contacts (Bombay, India: Shakuntala Publishing House, 1971).

easily distorted by later nationalists, who invoked it and falsified it in order to buttress chauvinistic theories of national superiority.

4. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)

Kant shared Herder's interest in national character; in fact, as Herder's teacher, he may have instilled this interest in Herder himself. But Kant's assessment of cultures' defining characteristics differed from Herder's in two fundamental respects. First, Kant was far more inclined to construct cultural hierarchies. Second, he appealed to fixed racialist categories in establishing cultural characteristics.[59] Though Herder also engaged in racialist observations, he conceived of racial difference as being a difference of gradations. With Kant, on the other hand, race became a rigid and immutable category.[60]

An affinity for such fixed categories is to be found throughout Kant's philosophical writings, particularly in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. In the *Critique*, Kant expounds his elaborate "table of categories" with its four principal headings ("quantity", "quality", "relation", "modality") and the tripartite division of each heading.[61] This almost fastidious attention to neatness and well-defined conceptual boundaries is carried over from his architectonic metaphysics to his speculations on race. In a review of Herder's *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man*, one of

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[59]Kant defined race as follows: populations "which, when transplanted (displaced to other areas), maintain themselves over protracted generation, and also generate hybrid young whenever they interbreed with other deviations of the same stock, are called *races*." Immanuel Kant, "On the Different Races of Man," in Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze (ed.), Race and the Enlightenment (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1997), p. 39.

[60]As John Zammito expresses it, the difference between the Herderian and the Kantian prejudice against other cultures is that the latter is racially-bound: "Herder's *cultural* contempt" as opposed to "Kant's *biological* disqualification". Zammito, p. 345.

[61]Kant, The Critique of Pure Reason, edited by Vasilis Politis; translated by J.M.D. Meiklejohn and Vasilis Politis (London, England: J.M. Dent, 2001), p. 85.

Kant's criticisms was that Herder had failed to achieve a proper understanding of race because of his apprehension in identifying distinct racial types.[62]

Kant's own racial taxonomy consists of four discrete races: the White, the Negro, the Hunnic, and the Hindu.[63] According to Kant, the white race includes Europeans, Moors, Arabs, and Persians, while the people of India are placed in their own separate category, whose designation clearly indicates that Kant is here conflating religious and racial categories. The conflation is even evident in his definition of the white race, which consists primarily of adherents of western monotheism (Christians, Jews, and Muslims). Kant's decision to divide the races along these lines is partly a result of his favouring Islam, which stems from the Judaeo-Christian tradition, over the paganism of the Indians. Consequently, he identifies the Arab, who is most closely identified with Islam, as the "noblest man in the Orient".[64]

However, Kant's representations of other cultures have much less to do with religion than with race. His disparagement of the Indian's moral character and intelligence is inseparable from his understanding of the racial characteristics of the Indian. The disreputable traits which Kant assigns to the so-called Hindu race become stock stereotypes drawn on by later nineteenth-century racists. He describes this race as suffering from "weakheartedness" and "timidity", engaging in "idolatrous reverence", possessing only "meagre talent", and behaving like "slavish underlings".[65] The obsequiousness of the Indian is one of his defining characteristics in later European racial discourse. Kant supposes that this intrinsic

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[62]Kant, "Reviews of Herder's *Ideas for a Philosophy of the History of Mankind*," in Lewis White Beck (ed.), On History (Indianapolis, Indiana: The Bobbs-Merrill Company Inc., 1963), p. 47.
[63]Kant, "On the Different Races of Man," p. 41.
[64]Kant, Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime, translated by John T. Goldthwait (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1991), p. 109.
[65]Kant, "Physical Geography," in Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze (ed.), Race and the Enlightenment (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1997), pp. 63-64.

obsequiousness is the racially-grounded source of Indian religion, which he depicts as being a degrading form of pantheism in which human beings debase themselves in the worship of beasts. He is of the opinion that pantheism as practiced by the Indians and the Chinese results in a state where the intellectual faculties cease to operate and thought "comes to an end".[66]

In his early aesthetic treatise, *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*, Kant expressed his disgust at Indian idolatry and its artistic expression in Indian religious sculptures.[67] His ideas about India were perfectly immune to the aesthetic romanticization of Herder and the German Romantics. Whereas Herder had set India apart on account of its Edenic qualities, Kant did not feel any affinity for India whatsoever. He showed greater respect for the character and the achievements of the more virile Hunnic race than those of the so-called Hindus. Thus, while Herder placed great importance on the distinction between the temperate and intemperate zones in influencing national character and physical appearance, Kant stressed the divide which separated the North from the South. However, he did not attempt to account for racial variations through climatic or geographical factors. In fact, Kant was so attached to the notion of unchanging racial types that he discounted environmental influences on race altogether.[68]

Consequently, Kant can justifiably be considered one of the first formulators of the modern essentialist idea of race. In his essay on Kant's racism, Robert Bernasconi even suggests that Kant is actually the originator of "the scientific concept of race" since he was the first scholar to provide the term with a precise definition.[69] His understanding of race certainly influenced later nineteenth-century

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[66]Kant, "The End of All Things," in Lewis White Beck (ed.), On History (Indianapolis, Indiana: The Bobbs-Merrill Company Inc., 1963), p. 79.
[67]Kant, Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime, p. 110.
[68]Mosse, Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism, pp. 30-31.
[69]Robert Bernasconi, "Kant as an Unfamiliar Source of Racism," in Julie K. Ward and Tommy L. Lott (eds.), Philosophers on Race (Oxford, England: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 2002), pp. 146-147.

racists, such as Houston Stewart Chamberlain.[70] But his racial taxonomy did not enjoy universal recognition by any means. The taxonomic differences with Herder are obvious. Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, the leading naturalist of the time, also avoided Kant's racial taxonomy.[71] A recognition of the disparities between these various modern theories of racial taxonomy problematizes Said's approach to Orientalism. The differences in Herder's, Kant's, and Blumenbach's reflections on race indicate the diversity of ways in which "Oriental" peoples were classified and exhibits the contradictions in European intellectual discourse about non-Europeans.

Whereas Kant utilized skin-colour as the fundamental determinant of racial difference, Blumenbach attempted to achieve a more scientifically-grounded definition of racial types based upon an assessment of a variety of physical characteristics.[72] Blumenbach was more specific in his division of humanity, which he believed consisted of five, as opposed to Kant's four, racial groups. He asserted that the Caucasian race (this famous term was itself Blumenbach's coinage) extended into east Asia down to the banks of the Ganges and encompassed the inhabitants of northern India.[73] However, he excluded the European Finns and Lapps from the Caucasian group and placed them amongst the Mongolians. Blumenbach's inclusion of Indians as members of the Caucasian racial family was a standard of racial classification up until the middle of the nineteenth century.

Baron Georges Leopold Cuvier, the French comparative anatomist and founder of modern palaeontology, accepted Blumenbach's categorization of the

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[70]Ivan Hannaford, Race: The History of an Idea in the West (Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), p. 218.

[71]Blumenbach exercised significant influence on the early theories of racial classification. In 1776, he became professor of medicine at Göttingen, from where his ideas were disseminated throughout Europe. He is often referred to as the father of the science of anthropology.

[72]Kant's belief that skin-colour is the distinguishing feature of race is evident in his colour-based designation of the four races: "very blond", "copper-red", "black", "olive-yellow". Kant, "On the Different Races of Man," p. 48.

[73]Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, "Degeneration of the Species," in Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze (ed.), Race and the Enlightenment (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1997), pp. 84-85.

Caucasian race and cited the affinity of Sanskrit and European languages as evidence of a racial propinquity between Europeans and Indians.[74] He even claimed that Indians were closer than Semites to European gentiles. The confusion between language and race was to persist for much of the nineteenth century and played a significant role in preserving the status of Indians as members of the Caucasian race. But because Kant perceived skin-colour to be the defining racial trait, he classified the inhabitants of the Indian sub-continent as a separate racial group. His decision to racially separate Indians from Europeans had a decisive consequence. Indians, like other non-whites, were denied a number of virtues which Kant deemed to be the monopoly of Europeans alone.

The cultural-geographical vision of Kant's, where character and culture are subsumed by race, rests on a series of sharp and impermeable divisions, grounded in an anthropological theory of racial hierarchy and essences. It is a vision which informs Kant's early and later anthropological writings alike. In Kant's later political work, particularly his essay *Perpetual Peace* (1802), it is true that there is a recognition of basic human rights, which appears to be applied by Kant to all races. His program for peace is accompanied by a recognition of the deleterious effects of recent European conquests. Specifically referring to the British involvement in India, he states that "under the pretense of establishing economic undertakings" the British have introduced a "whole litany of evils" to India.[75] In place of the violence and warfare of his age, Kant offered a political solution through which "the human race can gradually be brought closer and closer together to a constitution establishing world citizenship."[76] But despite this laudable aim, Kant's ideas on race prevented

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[74]Georges Leopold Cuvier, "Varieties of the Human Species," in Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze (ed.), Race and the Enlightenment (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1997), p. 105.
[75]Kant, "Perpetual Peace," in Lewis White Beck (ed.), On History (Indianapolis, Indiana: The Bobbs-Merrill Company Inc., 1963), p. 104.
[76]Ibid., p. 103.

him from formulating a pluralistic vision of equal cooperation between cultures. For example, because of his low opinion of Africans, he never spoke out against the slave-trade in favour of abolitionism; on the contrary, he considered Africans to be "born slaves"; this is all the more surprising considering that Kant's categorical imperative, and his concomitant notion that a man should not use other men as means to an end, easily lends itself to abolitionism.[77] In his mapping of cultures, the seemingly insuperable divide he sets up between the white race and all others vitiates any ideal of cultural cooperation from the outset. Kant's racialism indicates that a relationship between European and non-European cultures must always be an unequal one just as the races are intrinsically unequal.

5. Friedrich von Schlegel (1772-1829)

Herder's suggestion that "*a philosophical comparison of languages* would form the best essay on the history and diversified character of the human heart" was ambitiously taken up by Friedrich Schlegel and his fellow philologists, who sought to unlock the workings of the human mind and to understand cultural variations through linguistic analysis.[78] Vestiges of this linguistic dream are evident in the works of nearly all the major nineteenth-century philologists from Humboldt to Renan.

It was in the sphere of philology, a field Schlegel dominated in its early years in Germany, that a sustained scholarly interest in India was first generated. The beginning of serious research on India was made possible only by advances in European scholars' understanding of Sanskrit, which then facilitated the translation of a substantial corpus of Indian literature. From the outset, learning Sanskrit

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[77]Bernasconi, pp. 150-152.
[78]Herder, Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man, p. 237.

entailed training in philology. This area of study was consequently the most influential in shaping German scholars' initial interpretation of Indian culture. And since Schlegel's work decisively shaped the future of Sanskrit-studies in Germany, his writings on India deserve detailed attention.

Schlegel began his study of Sanskrit in Paris in 1803. At that time, he had already established himself as one of the leading figures of German Romanticism. With his brother August Wilhelm von Schlegel he had founded *Athenaeum* in 1798, a periodical which provided a forum for German Romanticism. In addition to writing articles for *Athenaeum* on the philosophy and aesthetic ideals of Romanticism, he also produced fictional works in the late 1790s, including the Romantic novel *Lucinde*.

While in Paris, he briefly worked with the British Indologist Sir Alexander Hamilton, who was one of the most accomplished Sanskritists in Europe at the time. Initially, Schlegel concentrated on learning Persian in Paris but his penchant for Sanskrit resulted in a change of focus; he became increasingly fixated on India. In a letter, written in 1803 to his fellow Romantic Ludwig Tieck, Schlegel fancifully exclaimed that "Here is the real source of all languages, thoughts, and poetry produced by the human spirit; everything, everything comes from India without exception."[79] He then went on to explain to Tieck how this discovery had reshaped his opinions on a number of issues.

Schlegel's attraction to India and the influence it exercised on his thought can partly be attributed to his own personal experiences. His elder brother Karl died in Madras in 1789 in the service of the Hanover Regiment; at the time, he was engaging

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[79]"Hier ist eigentlich die Quelle aller Sprachen, aller Gedanken, und Gedichte des menschlichen Geistes; alles, alles stammt aus Indien ohne Ausnahme." Klaus Behrens, Friedrich Schlegels Geschichtsphilosophie (1794-1808) (Tübingen, Germany; Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1984), p. 176.

in research on India.[80] The desire to continue the work of Karl may have influenced Friedrich and August Wilhelm, both of whom were to become two of the most renowned Sanskrit scholars in Europe. But a far more decisive factor in shaping Schlegel's views on India was the Romantic "*Denkart*" to which he subscribed; the fundamental feature of this Romantic mentality was the quest for origins, a quest which found expression in the merger of mysticism and historical inquiry.[81] Schlegel's work epitomizes this quest insofar as the origin, for him, represents an ideal or exemplar.

Schlegel imagined that in the beginning man existed in a state in which all his faculties were in harmony, a state which he and his fellow Romantics attempted to retrace and to regain. His belief in the original unity of art and religion is aptly conveyed by his assertion that "all poetical works are only fragments of the original revelation of the human race".[82] Schlegel derives inspiration from ancient India precisely because it represents a place and a time when religion was one with philosophy and art. He contrasts this harmonious ideal with the irreligiosity of modern Europeans. His exaltation of religion finds expression in his theory that "poetry and philosophy [are] only the preparation".[83] What is being prepared for is a religious revival. Schlegel states that if one wishes to learn what religion is one must study India, just as one must study Italy if one wishes to know what art is.[84] His image of India as a hotbed of religious revelation and mysticism was shared by the leading Romantics, particularly Novalis and Jean Paul. The Romantic

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[80]Dietmar Rothermund, The German Intellectual Quest for India (New Delhi, India: Manohar Publications, 1986), p. 33.
[81]Erich Ruprecht, "Geist und Denkart der romantischen Bewegung," in Reinhard Görisch (ed.), Perspektiven der Romantik (Bonn, Germany: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1987), p. 8.
[82]"alle Dichtungen sind nur Bruchstücke der ersten Offenbarung des Meschengeschlechts". Claudia Brauers, Perspektiven des Unendlichen: Friedrich Schlegels ästhetische Vermittlungstheorie (Berlin, Germany: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1996), p. 210.
[83]"Poesie und Philosophie nur die Vorbereitung". Behrens, p. 174.
[84]Ibid., p. 175.

mythologist Joseph von Görres well expressed the Romantics' mystical yearning for India: "To the Orient, to the banks of Ganges and Indus our mind feels mysteriously drawn."[85]

From the outset, Schlegel's philological work on Sanskrit was wedded to Romantic ideals. The culmination of his philological and Romantic inquiry into India was his study, published in 1808, *On the Language and Wisdom of the Indians*, a work which was principally concerned with philology though it also touched on the topics of Indian religion and aesthetic productions. In *Orientalism*, Said refers to *On the Language and Wisdom of the Indians* and Goethe's *West-Eastern Divan* as the two most influential works in all of German Orientalism.[86] In fact, though the *West-Eastern Divan* may have been more widely read by the lay public, the former work had a decisively greater impact on German scholarship.

Many of the tenets of Schlegel's magnum opus were drawn from British scholars. His observations on the grammar of Sanskrit, in particular, were shaped by the work of the Englishman Sir William Jones. In a now famous passage from his *Third Anniversary Discourse of the President of the Royal Asiatick Society*, Jones compared Sanskrit to Greek and Latin, concluding that Sanskrit possessed "a wonderful structure; more perfect than the *Greek*, more copious than the *Latin*, and more exquisitely refined than either".[87] A similar idea runs through Schlegel's work, but Schlegel expended more energy than Jones in establishing the consanguinity of Sanskrit and European languages. He sought out grammatical and syntactical similarities between Sanskrit and Greek and offered an abundance of examples to prove the lexical similarities between Sanskrit and Latin roots. Even prior to *On the*

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[85]Leifer, p. 210.
[86]Said, Orientalism, p. 19.
[87]William Jones, "Third Anniversary Discourse of the President of the Royal Asiatick Society- 'On the Hindus'," in Peter H. Salus (ed.), On Language: Plato to von Humboldt (New York, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston Inc., 1969), p. 172.

Language and Wisdom of the Indians, the propinquity of Indian and European languages had been posited, but Schlegel cemented these finds with a more scientific and scholarly approach to the available material.

Schlegel was intent upon establishing the scientific nature of philology, suggesting that "comparative grammar" ought to be compared to "comparative anatomy".[88] His interest in comparative anatomy, particularly in the work of Cuvier, accounts for his employment of organicist metaphors in describing language.

Despite modern modifications, Schlegel's general notion of an Indo-European language family (comprising most of the languages of Europe and the languages of northern India) is uncontested to this day. However, some of his theories regarding the application and the implications of philological studies have been overturned by modern linguists. One of Schlegel's most fundamental errors was his erroneous identification of linguistic with racial groups.[89] The conflating of race and language in such a seminal text contributed to a system of racial classification based upon language. And Schlegel's defense of the polygenesis of language lent encouragement to the idea that certain languages and, by extension, ethnic groups were irreducibly different. In fact, Schlegel attacked his predecessor Jones for his monogenetic leanings.[90]

A blurring of racial and linguistic lines was further exacerbated by Schlegel's attempt to construct a hierarchy of languages: a plan which could dovetail with theories of racial hierarchy. In Schlegel's schema of linguistic classification, Sanskrit was placed at the apex of Indo-European languages; closely followed by Greek, with Latin and German lagging behind. And while praising the civilization of the Chinese,

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[88]Schlegel, "On the Language and Wisdom of the Indians," p. 439.
[89]Ibid., p. 429.
[90]Sebastiano Timpanaro, "Friedrich Schlegel and the Development of Comparative Linguistics in the 19th Century," in E.F.K. Koerner (ed.), Ueber die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier (Amsterdam, Netherlands: John Benjamins B.V., 1977), p. xxii.

Schlegel complained that their overly analytic language was of "the lowest grade".[91] In regards to Hebrew and Arabic, he commended their power for conveying religious ideas but denied them the organic qualities which belonged to the Indo-European group alone.

In his comparison of languages, Schlegel intimated that Sanskrit itself might be the true parent language of the entire Indo-European family.[92] The other languages would thus represent different degrees of Sanskrit's degeneration; Schlegel believed that this degeneration was partly due to a mixing with agglutinative non-Indo-European languages. His fanciful musings on linguistic purity provided ammunition for later figures, who upheld an ideal of racial purity and had anxieties about miscegenation.

What appears to have greatly impressed Schlegel about Sanskrit was the language's antiquity and its "perfect simplicity" exemplified by a lack of structural "irregularities", the paucity of irregular verbs, the absence of onomatopoeic words, and the ability to dispense with prepositions as a result of high inflection.[93] For Schlegel and other German philologists, modification by "internal changes" (i.e. inflection) was believed to give "freer scope" to a language, furnishing it with "richness", "strength", and "fertility".[94] The last term was particularly important as it indicated the organic nature of inflected languages, in contrast to the sterile "agglutinative" languages of the Native Americans, Semites, and Chinese. Schlegel conceived of a Sanskrit or Greek word as being "a living and productive germ" while he derided words from uninflected languages as artificial and lacking in vitality.[95]

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[91] Schlegel, "On the Language and Wisdom of the Indians," p. 448.
[92] Timpanaro, p. xxiv.
[93] Schlegel, "On the Language and Wisdom of the Indians," pp. 444-445.
[94] Ibid., p. 449.
[95] Ibid., p. 449.

Schlegel's aesthetic prejudices are continually dressed in the garb of science, a tendency which mars much of nineteenth-century philology. His unfounded distinction between organic and inorganic/agglutinative languages was reformulated most forcefully by Renan who used the opposition to attack the Semitic languages (Arabic, Hebrew) and by extension the mental and spiritual constitution of the Semitic peoples.[96] Likewise, Schlegel himself sought to unveil the character and the mode of thought of a people by investigating its language. According to Schlegel, Sanskrit is unmatched in its simple regularity (making it the most aesthetically pleasing language) and its clarity (which makes it, with Greek, one of the two most philosophical languages).[97] He writes that Sanskrit "exemplifies the loftiest ideas of the pure world of thought".[98]

This fanciful assessment of Sanskrit was not merely echoed by philologists but was also well received by later philosophers. Over a hundred years later, Heidegger identified Greek, Sanskrit, and "cultivated German" as being the three "implicitly philosophical" languages and consequently "distinguished above every other language".[99] The emphasis placed upon linguistic structure was a consequence of the weight allotted to the role of language in thought. In his *Philosophy of Language*, Schlegel referred to language as "the common memory of the human

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[96]Without exculpating Schlegel, it must be noted that he was one of the least anti-Semitic scholars of his time. He was married to the daughter of the eminent Jewish philosopher Moses Mendelssohn and he admired the structure of the Hebrew language. In fact, following the publication of "On the Language and Wisdom of the Indians", he lectured on the virtues of Hebrew and claimed that it was more suited to conveying religious ideas than any of the Indo-European languages, including Greek and Sanskrit. In his lectures on the philosophy of language, he also suggested that Hebrew and the Indo-European languages might be closer than he had previously thought. Ironically, the distinction between organic and agglutinative languages which he introduced was constantly used by anti-Semitic philologists to undermine the status of Hebrew. Schlegel's own pupil Christian Lassen attacked Semitic speakers on the grounds that their language was deficient in "balance", lacking the "deep imagination" and the "sharp reason" exemplified in the structure and grammar of Sanskrit. Mosse, Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism, p. 41.

[97]Schlegel, "On the Language and Wisdom of the Indians," p. 457.

[98]Ibid., p. 454.

[99]Martin Heidegger, Nietzsche, Volume IV: Nihilism, edited by David Farrell Krell, translated by Frank A. Capuzzi (San Francisco, California: Harper and Row Publishers, 1982), p. 37.

race" and it was by historically tracing the development of language that he believed that one could penetrate past modes of thinking.[100] For Schlegel and other philologists, language was not merely material but something intellectual and even spiritual; hence Humboldt's expression that language is "the organ of the internal being": a metaphor which discloses the importance of the relationship between language and spirit in the eyes of German philologists.[101] The prevalence of this linguistic prejudice, which Schlegel transmitted to later scholars, helped to preserve sympathy for Indian literature and philosophy despite the contagion of racism which infected Orientalism in the late nineteenth century.

The interests and prejudices of German linguists provide a powerful explanation for why the Germans were more receptive to Indian culture than the English and French. Among the major north-western European languages, German is the most highly inflected, endowed with a fairly well-developed system of cases, similar to Greek, which is lacking in both English and French. By exalting the structure of Sanskrit and the other highly inflected classical languages, German scholars were indirectly placing their own language above other modern European languages in its capacity for higher philosophical thought.[102] In the process, they produced a cultural map in which Germany's linguistic/cultural proximity to Greece and India was greater than Britain's or France's.

The notion of a connection between India, Greece, and Germany was one of Schlegel's great contributions to German cultural geography. At a time when Hellenophilia was sweeping through Germany, the idea of a connection between

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[100]Schlegel, "Philosophy of Language," in A.J.W. Morrison (ed.), The Philosophy of Life and Philosophy of Language (London, England: G. Bell and Sons Ltd., 1913), p. 407.

[101]Wilhelm von Humboldt, Linguistic Variability and Intellectual Development, translated by George C. Buck and Frithjof A. Raven. (Coral Gables, Florida: University of Miami Press, 1971), p. xxi.

[102]In an interview in 1966, Heidegger spoke of his belief in "the special inner affinity of the German language to the language of the Greeks and their thinking. This is confirmed to me again and again by the French. When they begin to think they speak German." Walter Kaufmann, Discovering the Mind: Volume II: Nietzsche, Heidegger, Buber (New York, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1980), p. 181.

Greece and India was instrumental in generating an interest in India.[103] Even after Schlegel became sated with his study of India, in his lectures on the philosophy of life he still referred to the Hindus as "those Greeks of the primeval world!".[104] It is an equation rooted in Romantic philology, but one which would find approbation outside of philological circles. Schlegel's reflections on language were thus decisive not only in shaping comparative linguistics in Germany but in shaping German cultural geography.

Schlegel's understanding of history and philosophy was integrally related to his ideas on language. In *On the Language and Wisdom of the Indians*, his historical account of the degeneration of philosophy corresponds with his depiction of the degeneration of language, which loses its inflection over time. For Schlegel, the transition of a philosophy based upon revelation to one rooted in rationalism marks the turning point from eastern to western philosophy. Hegel would readily concur but his positive interpretation of the transition is in direct contradiction with Schlegel's. In keeping with his historical theory of gradual decline, Schlegel describes the manner in which Indian idealism was supplanted by the less developed idealistic philosophy of Plato, which in turn fell prey to skepticism, and was finally devoured by empiricism.[105] In this plotline of the history of western philosophy, "the idea of a Supreme divinity" is continually obscured by a failure to acknowledge the existence and importance of God.[106] Consequently, even the "loftiest philosophy of the Europeans", propounded by the Greeks, was dubbed by Schlegel as "faltering and feeble" when set beside "the abundant light and vigour of Oriental idealism".[107]

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[103]For a fuller treatment of the German fascination with ancient Greece, see E.M. Butler, The Tyranny of Greece over Germany (Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 1958).
[104]Schlegel, "Philosophy of Life," in A.J.W. Morrison (ed.), The Philosophy of Life and Philosophy of Language (London, England: G. Bell and Sons Ltd., 1913), p. 5.
[105]Schlegel, "On the Language and Wisdom of the Indians," p. 519.
[106]Ibid., p. 519.
[107]Ibid., p. 520.

In his later writings, following the publication of *On the Language and Wisdom of the Indians*, such praise is rarely to be found. Schlegel became increasingly disillusioned with India as it had failed to live up to his wildly Romantic expectations. He converted to Catholicism in 1808, after which his thinking was shaped more in accordance with Biblical scripture rather than ancient Indian texts. But the later writings of Schlegel exercised far less influence on German philology.[108] This may in part be attributed to the fact that he never received a secure professional post at a university, even though the number of chairs available for Sanskritists in Europe increased considerably during the last decade of his life. The first two chairs for Sanskrit studies in the German-speaking world, one in Bonn and one in Berlin, were both set up in 1818, and were occupied by August Wilhelm Schlegel and Franz Bopp respectively.[109] From their posts, these two men were able to pass on their philological ideas and expertise to a new generation of German scholars.

Friedrich Schlegel, on the other hand, made few philological contributions following 1808. His work was taken up by other scholars, namely Bopp and the Danish philologist Rasmus Kristian Rask, who transformed philology into a methodologically rigorous science. But many of his earlier precepts continued to exercise tremendous influence, even those which he later repudiated.[110] His conflation of linguistic and racial groups, his belief in the polygenesis of language, his distinction between organic and agglutinative languages, his notion that language is indicative of a people's spiritual constitution, and his theory of a hierarchy of languages all proved to be terribly resilient. Thus, despite Schlegel's own loss of

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[108]Timpanaro describes Schlegel's post-1808 musings on language as a "*fantasquerie*" which had "no noteworthy influence on 19th-century linguistics". Timpanaro, p. xxvi.

[109]Schwab, p. 179.

[110]In the 1820s, Schlegel denied the polygenesis of languages but to little effect. Even his brother August Wilhelm, who exercised great influence as a professional Sanskritist, continued to uphold the polygeneticist position. Timpanaro, pp. xxvi-xxvii.

interest in India, his philological work ensured a continuing interest in India among later German scholars.

It should also be noted that the depth of Schlegel's disenchantment has at times been overestimated. For example, Said hyperbolically refers to Schlegel's change of heart as a "revulsion" from all things Indic.[111] Though it cannot be denied that Schlegel failed to sustain his early enthusiasm for India, an acquaintance with his writings from the 1820s indicates the exaggeration of Said's judgment.

In his *Philosophy of History*, a course of lectures delivered in Vienna in 1828, Schlegel modified his early theory of history and softened his vigorous portrayal of historical retrogression. It is replaced by a grand historical scheme in which different historical peoples are associated with distinct intrinsic principles. Schlegel paints a colourful picture of history in which mankind's various spiritual and intellectual faculties become isolated from one another and man falls into discord with himself and others. Different civilizations come to embody specific faculties, without possessing the longed-for harmony of the whole. Schlegel connects India with the imagination, China with reason, Egypt with the understanding, and the Israelites with will.[112] Similar associations were already being made in the eighteenth century. During the Enlightenment, the French *philosophes* proved to be more open to Chinese than Indian culture precisely because the former was already being associated with reason, rational government, and orderly institutions; on the other hand, even at that time, India was noted for its mysticism and absence of rationality. Following the Romantic assault on the Enlightenment ideal of absolute reason, India came to prominence since it supposedly embodied one of the principles

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[111] Said, Orientalism, p. 150.

[112] Schlegel, The Philosophy of History, translated by James Baron Robertson (London, England: Henry G. Bohn, 1846), pp. 162-170.

which the Romantics found so attractive. China suffered from a simultaneous loss of status.

The representation of India as an enchanted realm partly explains why Schlegel and other Romantics were drawn to India. The association between India and imagination was almost universal among German intellectuals in the early nineteenth century, among those who were sympathetic and antipathetic to India alike. But when Schlegel depicted India as the land of the imagination in his history lectures, it was no longer the same Edenic India to which he once appealed. In the early 1800s, he felt that India was distinguished not only by imagination but by its harmonizing of religion and art. By the 1820s, his elusive ideal of the once realized synthesis between religion and art was projected further back in time towards an unknown Eden. Whereas India had once been this very Eden for Schlegel, after his disenchantment with India it became just one of many ancient nations emerging after the Fall.

Schlegel's later account of history, as expressed in his lectures, is skewed by his geographical preference for the northern regions of the globe. He states that the northern hemisphere is naturally distinguished above the southern, an idea which he claims is scientifically verifiable.[113] His proofs include the greater ratio of land to water in the northern regions and the greater beauty of the constellations when viewed from the North. Yet he explicitly repudiates the thesis that man's original homeland was the north pole and insists that man first emerged from central Asia.[114] Schlegel's decision to situate Eden in the nebulous vicinity of central Asia rather than India, as he had done in the past, is illustrative of the loss of his former enthusiasm. The belief in a northward migration out of Asia, however, had been

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[113] Ibid., pp. 79-80.
[114] Ibid., p. 81.

professed by Schlegel nearly decades before. In 1808, Schlegel wrote that some of the ancient peoples of India migrated to Europe because they were spiritually drawn to the North.[115] It is a rather ironic interpretation considering that Schlegel, himself a "northerner", was spiritually drawn to the East.

Once the exaltation of the North achieved ascendancy over the tendency to romanticize the East, India lost much of its Romantic appeal. Nevertheless, as already stated, despite Schlegel's own loss of enthusiasm for Indian culture, his early philological work and his early romantic portrayal of India had a profound impact on later German Indology. His conflation of language and culture represents a crucial development in German cultural geography. The traditional geographical divide between Europe and Asia is upset by Schlegel's linguistic taxonomy. This reversal finds a cosmopolitan expression in Schlegel's judgment that "Asians and Europeans constitute a single great family, Asia and Europe are an indivisible whole".[116] His theory of an Indo-European linguistic family cuts across a substantial geographical space; it encompasses western Europeans, Persians, and Indians. However, it also excludes certain European inhabitants, namely the Jews. The formulation of a linguistic division between Aryans and Semites would have far-reaching implications throughout Europe but in Germany in particular.

The rise of German philology, which owes much to Schlegel, illustrates how the contestation between cultural nodes bears directly on the representations of other cultures. When certain cultural nodes are privileged, there are direct consequences on cultural mapping. Thus, the German philological prejudice, which stressed the importance of language as a determinant of being, established a linguistic theory of culture; the resulting cultural map placed all members of the Indo-European, also

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[115] Schlegel, "On the Language and Wisdom of the Indians," p. 514.
[116] Timpanaro, p. xxix.

referred to as the Indo-Aryan and even Indo-Germanic, linguistic family together while separating the peoples of the Hamito-Semitic linguistic family, including Arabs, Jews, and north Africans.[117] On the other hand, the German racialist prejudice frequently conflicted with the aforementioned taxonomy by privileging race, as expressed in external physical characteristics, over language; therefore, the racialist cultural map often placed those peoples who were of lighter complexion together in one category and those having a darker complexion in another. The prominence given to these cultural nodes by German intellectuals was naturally decisive in determining their representations of India. Of course, it must be recognized that the sites of particular nodes were themselves sites of contestation. Not all philologists were in agreement, neither were all racists. But the discursive struggle at these sites invariably affected cultural geography.

Schlegel's own representation of India, particularly his assessment of Sanskrit, signals a move towards a displacement in which German culture is placed closer to India, and is partially distanced from western Europe. There is a consequent disruption of previous definitions of European culture, as is apparent in Schlegel's pronouncement that "we are perhaps wrong to view Europe so completely as a unified whole" [118] But the ideal of a European-wide cultural rebirth remains, and Schlegel suggests that Germany might yet inaugurate a new Romantic renaissance in Europe through a synthesis of the best aspects of Orient and Occident.[119] The shift in the cultural mapping of Germany accounts for August Wilhelm Schlegel's assertion that "Germany must be considered the Orient of Europe".[120]

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[117]The extent of the idea of a consanguinity between Germany and India is evident in the fact that some German philologists preferred the term Indo-Germanic to Indo-European. The first term was coined by Heinrich Julius von Klaproth in 1823 and became quite popular even though Bopp and other leading philologists rightly opposed the designation, which appeared to exclude or belittle non-Germanic European languages. Poliakov, p. 193.

[118]"wir Europa vielleicht mit Unrecht so durchaus als Einheit betrachten". Behrens, p. 183.

[119]Ibid., p. 182.

[120]Poliakov, p. 183.

6. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831)

Hegel's philosophy is unique in its emphasis on historical development. Of course, other philosophers before Hegel had not failed to observe the need for a philosophical study of history. In the early eighteenth century, Vico had already developed a complex historical model of periods through which societies pass. Several decades later, in 1780, Lessing charted the three stages of humanity's development in his *Education of the Human Race*. And among the German Idealists, Schelling also expressed an interest in historical development, particularly in regards to the development of consciousness, in his *System of Transcendental Idealism* written in 1800. Many of Schelling's ideas in this work point to themes of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807). Nevertheless, the centrality of history in Hegel's philosophy distinguishes it from that of his contemporaries.

Hegel's philosophical approach to the study of world history, as expounded in his lectures on the philosophy of history from the 1820s, is foreshadowed by his *Phenomenology of Spirit*. In his preface to the *Phenomenology*, Hegel asserted the necessity of having a philosophical system: "the true shape in which truth exists can only be the scientific system of such truth".[121] For Hegel, the system is not something static and lifeless but something dynamic which is continually developing. It is because of the dynamic aspect that he gives so much importance to stages within the system. He maintains that a proper apprehension of consciousness is impossible without understanding the stages through which consciousness has historically passed.

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[121]Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Phenomenology of Spirit, translated by A.V. Miller (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1977), p. 3.

> Since the Substance of the individual, the World-Spirit itself, has had the patience to pass through these shapes [stages] over the long passage of time, and to take upon itself the enormous labour of world-history. . . and since it could not have attained consciousness of itself by any lesser effort, the individual certainly cannot by the nature of the case comprehend his own substance more easily.[122]

This audacious and strikingly original idea not only explains Hegel's approach to the study of consciousness but also to the study of world-history and the study of different cultures.

Hegel, not unlike Herder, was very much interested in determining the *Volksgeist* of cultures. But whereas Herder viewed cultures in relative isolation, Hegel viewed them as part of a grand historical sequence, almost as if they were stepping-stones in the narrative of human progress. His philosophy of history is an avowed theodicy, an attempt to historically trace, rationalize, and justify the movements of the World-Spirit. History, says Hegel, is essentially the history of the march of the Idea of Freedom and Hegel's philosophy represents the apprehension of this Idea in time.[123]

For Hegel, history only begins with the formation of political states.[124] Because there can be no freedom outside of the state, those peoples without any form of government are thus beyond the pale of history. The degree to which a

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[122]Ibid., p. 17.

[123]Hegel, The Philosophy of History, translated by J. Sibree (New York, New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1956), p. 19. Wherever possible I have employed Sibree's translation which is based on Karl Hegel's edition. However, much of what Hegel wrote on the subject of world-history is not contained in The Philosophy of History. Nor is this information contained in Hegel's collected works; see Hegel, Sämtliche Werke: Jubiläumausgabe in Zwanzig Bänden, edited by Hermann Glockner (Stuttgart, Germany: Fr. Frommann Verlag, 1957-1965). Consequently, whenever necessary I cite Hegel's Vorlesungen Über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte (Hamburg, Germany: Felix Meiner, 1976), rather than the condensed English translation.

[124]Hegel, The Philosophy of History, p. 111.

people participate in history is inseparable from their participation in the advancement of freedom. Consequently, Hegel argued that even though China and India had complex political states they existed only on history's periphery because there was a total absence of subjective freedom ("*die subjektive Freiheit*") in these societies.[125] Also, they did not advance the cause of freedom in any way; they experienced no internal political development nor did they spread freedom to other cultures. The sense in which Hegel uses the word freedom is obviously foreign to most liberals; it is markedly antithetical to J.S. Mill's idea that freedom is nothing more than the liberty to do what one desires. Hegel's is a philosophy which conceives of freedom not as the caprice of the individual but as the harmonizing of the individual will with the laws of the state.[126]

Underlying and sustaining his philosophy is a belief in the inevitability of progress. However, Hegel never subscribed to a crude temporal prejudice which unequivocally exalted the present at the expense of the past. His philosophy of history does not encompass all of humanity simultaneously but divides it up into broad but discrete cultures and civilizations which are then examined separately. Individual cultures parallel, although imperfectly, the stages of consciousness which Hegel set forth in the *Phenomenology*. The manner in which he goes about delineating the differences between cultures partly reveals the source of his conception of India. But before addressing the question of his criterion for defining distinct cultures, it is necessary to examine which cultures are given precedence in his historical model.

Hegel determines the primacy of cultures on the basis of influence. He sets up an equation between the good and the successful.[127] Those who triumph have

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[125]Hegel, Vorlesungen Über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte, p. 275.
[126]Hegel, Philosophy of Right, pp. 106-107.
[127]Isaiah Berlin, Freedom and Its Betrayal: Six Enemies of Human Liberty (Princeton, New Jersey:

been "chosen by history"; those who are defeated, have been rejected. This worship of success accounts for the fashion in which Hegel understands the movement of history. In an age of unparalleled European dominance, the formulation of such an idea implicitly favoured Europe and the rising European imperialist powers. In fact, in his reflections on history, Hegel made the connection quite explicit.

According to Hegel, history moves westwards. The geographical bias in favour of the western world finds expression in Hegel's pronouncement that "the History of the world travels from East to West, for Europe is absolutely the End of history, Asia the beginning."[128] This Eurocentric vision of history rests on a series of exclusions in which specific cultures or civilizations are either banished from history altogether or relegated to the periphery. Moreover, even those civilizations which occupy the centre-stage of the world-historical drama only do so for a brief period of time. Thus, history proper begins in hither-Asia (*die orientalische Welt*), before passing on to Greece (*die griechische Welt*), then to Rome (*die römische Welt*), and finally to the Germanic nations (*die germanische Welt*).[129] What is distinctive about the Hegelian historical schema is that no two "worlds" (*Welten*) can simultaneously carry the torch of history; the torch passes from the hands of one civilization to the next. All development takes place in a single sequence of stages.[130] This pattern, which Hegel violently projects onto the past, is one of the

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Princeton University Press, 2003), p. 98.

[128]Hegel, The Philosophy of History, p. 173.

[129]When Hegel speaks of the Germanic world, he does not merely designate modern-day Germans. It is used to refer to the collective world of Germanic peoples, including the English, the Scandinavians, and also older Germanic tribes (such as the Goths and the Franks). In his translation of The Philosophy of History, J. Sibree inaccurately translates "germanisch" (Germanic) as "German". This rendering may give rise to the impression that Hegel was a petty German nationalist, which he most certainly was not. However, the suggestion in C.J. Friedrich's preface that "germanisch" ought to be interpreted as applying to the French is also misleading and somewhat distorts Hegel's use of the term. Hegel does indeed devote considerable attention to the events of the French Revolution but that is not to say that he considers the French to be part of the Germanic world.

[130]The sequence of historical stages is never explicitly presented in the form of the "thesis-antithesis-synthesis" triad which is so often attributed to Hegel. Whatever the deficiencies of Hegel's system of historical movement may be, it is certainly more sophisticated than that. Walter Kaufmann, Hegel: A

primary sources of his exclusion of particular peoples. It saves him the trouble of having to entertain the possibility that two or more different or distant civilizations can possess an equally high degree of historical development simultaneously.

Not only does the paradigm account for Hegel's failure to address changes over time in India, and also China, but it also explains his omission of important events within Europe itself. For example, in his lectures on the philosophy of history, Hegel completely ignores Russian history. Even more surprising is his neglect of the Renaissance. There is virtually no reference to internal developments in Italy during the Renaissance apart from a passing reference to Raphael.[131] If Hegel does refer to Italy, it is primarily in its external relationship to Germanic peoples, dynasties, or individuals such as the Hohenstaufens and Martin Luther. Obviously, because the Italians themselves do not properly belong to *die germanische Welt*, they can largely be dispensed with according to the Hegelian historical project. The result is that Hegel can move effortlessly from the middle ages to the Protestant Reformation without taking account of the contributions of the Renaissance.[132] Such a method of exclusion is present throughout his philosophy of history. By dismissing certain cultures, Hegel is able to simplify history and thereby make smooth and unproblematic transitions between historical epochs. This practice ought not to be considered as being purely capricious. On the contrary, it is inseparable from his philosophical-historical procedure and permits him to make sweeping metaphysical generalizations about world-history.

Reinterpretation (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1978), p. 154.

[131]Hegel, Vorlesungen Über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte, p. 869.

[132]An interesting alternative to the Hegelian position is put forward by Jacob Burckhardt. In The Civilization of the Italian Renaissance, he credits the Renaissance with "the discovery of man"; Burckhardt's idea is noteworthy given Hegel's own interest in the historical development of man's consciousness of himself as man.

The treatment of civilizations as discrete entities is an essential prerequisite for tracing the movement of the World-Spirit. It places Hegel in a position to depict different civilizations as embodying specific principles. The identification of these underlying principles constitutes the philosophical aspect of the philosophy of history. It is a reductionist tendency which is frequently encountered in Hegel's reflections on history, but it is particularly prominent in his study of so-called Oriental cultures. For example, Hegel reduces all of Indian culture to a single principle: "*Unterschied*" (difference).[133] Hegel sees this one principle at work throughout Indian society, in its religion, philosophy, art, morality, and political life. He drowns the diverse aspects of Indian culture in an abiding abstracted unity. Seizing upon a huge geographical area which has been inhabited for thousands of years and possesses a diversity of languages, beliefs, institutions, and customs, Hegel summarizes its essential character with a single word.

Such a procedure is greatly facilitated by Hegel's assessment of the lack of history in India. Because India does not possess history and does not progress, it is all the easier to characterize. A similar method is employed by Hegel in his assessment of China which, in contrast to India, is based on the principle of "*Gleichheit*" (identity).[134] It is only as Hegel's gaze moves westward that his description of cultures becomes increasingly nuanced. In his disquisitions on western societies, he is more prone to recognizing tensions and contradictions, and his account of European history is consequently much more convincing. He is also less explicit in connecting western societies to specific reductive principles; this is precisely because he recognizes that they are continually developing and undergoing

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[133]Hegel, Vorlesungen Über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte, p. 343. He writes, "Das indische Prinzip ist das zweite des Begriffs, nämlich der Unterschied überhaupt, der bestimmte, feste Unterschied." Hegel sees the principle of "Unterschied" operating most forcefully in the Indian caste system, where strict and artificial social divisions are imagined to be sanctioned by nature.

[134]Ibid., p. 299.

important transformations through time. On the other hand, China and India are merely "stationary".[135]

The idea of the Orient's inability to progress, its backwardness, was one of the key themes of European imperialist discourse. Hegel not only adduced evidence in favour of the idea, but he lent it a philosophical justification.[136] More than those of any other major German philosopher's, Hegel's ideas about India approximate the ideas of British imperialists. In describing the characteristics of India's people and institutions, he relies heavily and uncritically on British accounts. Reproducing these accounts, Hegel belittles the cultural achievements of India, a nation which possesses "neither morality, nor justice, nor religiosity" and where "evil passions have their full swing".[137] He identifies "deceit and cunning" as the Indians' most salient features, and reports that "stealing, robbing, murdering" are practices that are "habitual" to these people.[138] He describes the Indian as "pusillanimous and effeminate".[139] He makes much of his slavishness and speaks of him "humbly crouching and abject before a victor and lord".[140] Hegel explains this sycophantic nature as originating in the subject's physical or racial constitution, his "excitement and debility of the nerves".[141]

The racialist dimension of Hegel's representation of India ought not to be ignored. Though Hegel does not dwell on the subject of race, his ideas are clearly informed by racialist notions. In his division of humankind as articulated in his lectures on the philosophy of history, he identifies three separate races: the

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[135]Hegel, The Philosophy of History, p. 139.
[136]Balachandra Rajan, Under Western Eyes: India from Milton to Macaulay (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1999), p. 107.
[137]Hegel, The Philosophy of History, pp. 147-148.
[138]Ibid., p. 158.
[139]Ibid., p. 149.
[140]Ibid., p. 158.
[141]Ibid., p. 162.

Caucasian, the African, and the Mongolian.[142] Hegel maintains that only the first race possesses history. While India and China belong to the Asiatic stock, the peoples of hither-Asia (including the Persians, the Babylonians, and the Phoenicians) are defined as Caucasian. The Egyptians are also recognized as Caucasian but the inhabitants of the remainder of Africa are not. By breaking down the races in this fashion Hegel secures the uncontested place of the white race at the forefront of history. After all, even those segments of the Oriental world which possess history are Caucasian. Hegel supplements this taxonomy by remarking on the "peculiarity" of the Chinese and the Indians as compared with the Persians, who are so much more European in their behaviour than are east Asians.[143]

The three racial groups correspond closely to three stages of historical development. At the bottom are the Africans, who possess no history whatsoever and are thus, in many ways, closer to the natural world than to the world of other men.[144] The second stage of history is occupied by the Mongolians, who represent a preliminary stage of history and who have had some ephemeral influences on the course of world historical events. And, finally, the Caucasian race is placed at the apex of the hierarchy, as it alone has ever possessed history proper. Though Hegel does not make these connections so explicitly, it is easily confirmed by a simple comparison of his racial taxonomy and his classification of the stages of historical development.

Though the racial taxonomy which Hegel employed later achieved great vogue, it was not the only system of racial classification during the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth century. On the contrary, naturalists such as Blumenbach

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[142] Ibid., p. 173.
[143] Ibid., p. 173.
[144] Hegel describes "the Negro" as "the natural man in his completely wild and untamed state". Ibid., p. 93.

provided racial taxonomies which were substantially different from Hegel's.[145] Clearly, Hegel was not merely adopting the views of his time but was partly tailoring his ideas about race to correspond with his ideas on history. His classification of races certainly bears great resemblance to Kant's, but it is even more simplified as it reduces the number of racial groups from four to three. The Kantian racial category which disappears is that of the Hindus, which Hegel simply incorporates into the Mongolian class.

The racial aspect of Hegel's thought is also evident in his treatment of the Indian intellect. After addressing the Indian peoples' moral habits and religious beliefs at length, Hegel takes issue with their cognitive faculties. He deems the Indian incapable of "reflection" because of his inability to contemplate upon an object "by means of rational predicates assigned to it".[146] Despite this damning criticism, he inexplicably admits that India is home to "intellectual products. . . of the profoundest order of thought".[147] The apparent contradiction between these two statements is a consequence of Hegel's assessment of the role of imagination in thought. The profundity of the "intellectual products" in question is a result of the Indian's gift for imagination. Hegel, like the Romantics who preceded him, fancies India to be a world of limitless imagination.[148] But whereas the Romantics considered this imaginative realm to be an ideal state, Hegel brushes it aside as being indicative of a lower stage of intellectual development where imagination is so highly developed that rational thought is impossible. The prominence of poetic literature and the ostensible absence of Indian prose works are cited by Hegel as

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[145]Ernst Schulin incorrectly identifies Hegel's racial classification of Asians with Blumenbach's. But the taxonomies of the two markedly differ on crucial points, including the number of races identified and the taxonomic method employed in classifying racial groups. Ernst Schulin, Die weltgeschichtliche Erfassung des Orients bei Hegel und Ranke (Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1958), pp. 46-47.
[146]Hegel, The Philosophy of History, p. 157. This was a criticism which Kant had also made of Indians.
[147]Ibid., p. 61.
[148]Ibid., pp. 139-140.

indicating a mode of thought which is purely imaginative and lacking in objectivity. Not surprisingly, the tendency of the Indians to write even scientific treatises in verse, though disparaged by Hegel, fascinated the Romantics. Hegel himself was not, however, immune to Romantic influences and his representations of India bear the mark of a residual Romanticism. His identification of India as "a fairy region, an enchanted World" was directly borrowed from the Romantics.[149] But Hegel incorporated the Romantic vision of India only to belittle it. He devoted more attention to India than to any other region of Asia, but his aim in doing so was to undermine India's Romantic appeal.[150]

In his lectures on world-history, Hegel compares the allure of India to the beauty of a woman asleep. His gendered representation draws attention to both India's passivity and sensuality. Modern Europe, on the other hand, is represented as embodying manly virtues, as actively penetrating the sleeping Orient. In his reading of Hegel's image of India, A. Leslie Willson interprets Hegel's description of the beauty of the sleeping woman as being applied to Indian women.[151] But Hegel is describing the attractiveness not of India's people but of its spirit. The sleeping woman is a personification of Indian culture and cannot be read literally. Moreover, Willson fails to mention Hegel's final judgment on the peculiar, foreign beauty of India. In the final analysis, Hegel says that it is a beauty of enervation and one which looks less and less attractive the more it is subjected to scrutiny. This idea is corroborated by his insistence that the more one learns about Indian cultural achievements, particularly its scientific and artistic achievements, the less

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[149]Ibid., p. 139.
[150]Schulin, p. 76.
[151]Willson, p. 118.

impressive they appear. Knowledge of India only serves to confirm its unattractiveness and inferiority.[152]

Among philologists, one of the most attractive characteristics of ancient India was thought to be its language; an attachment to Sanskrit ensured a continuing interest in India. Not surprisingly, Hegel was unimpressed by Sanskrit and the claims which German philologists made for it. Still, the philological notion of a connection between India, Greece, and Germany left a slight mark on Hegel, as is apparent in his treatment of the Orient. He states that while China is quite "peculiarly Oriental", "India we might compare with Greece".[153] The fact that Hegel, whose ideas on India are so close to those of Macaulay and Mill, would admit the existence of a resemblance between India and Greece is indicative of the prevalence of this idea rooted in German philology.

On the whole, however, Hegel's notion of the nature and the development of language was antithetical to the dominant philological position of his time. The philologists' notion of continual linguistic degeneration constituted a significant threat to the Hegelian theory of progress. Hegel's solution was to deny the significance of inflection in language and to affirm that advancing peoples recognize highly inflected language to be "an obstruction".[154] Therefore, language becomes "poorer and ruder" as a nation's "intellectual condition" improves.[155] This particular idea achieved little resonance in Germany, perhaps because of its potential implications that the German language was less suited to intellectual pursuits than French and English. To be sure, though Hegel's work revolutionized German philosophy and historiography, philologists remained relatively untouched by

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[152]Hegel, Vorlesungen Über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte, p. 393.
[153]Hegel, The Philosophy of History, p. 113.
[154]Ibid., pp. 62-63.
[155]Ibid., p. 62.

Hegelian thought. These philologists constituted a powerful bloc in German scholarship, which not only impeded the advancement of Hegelian philosophy but even sought to prevent Hegel himself from rising in the Academic ranks.[156]

In his disputes with Schlegel and other philologists, Hegel did in fact accept many of their discoveries but he questioned their significance. For example, on the basis of contemporary philological evidence, he was compelled to concede the existence of a connection between the Germanic and the Indian peoples.[157] However, he diminished the importance of the connection by relegating it to a pre-historical time period.[158] Consequently, even while Hegel admitted that philologists had proven that Europeans originally migrated from India and that India was "the centre of emigration for all the western world", he refused to assign this Indic origin any importance.[159] He argued that the existence of an Indo-European relationship only applied to the distant past and had no significant implications for modern Europeans.[160]

Hegel felt that the religious ties between Indians and Europeans were even more tenuous than the linguistic ties. Comparative religious approaches which sought to uncover similarities between Hinduism and Christianity were spurned by Hegel. For Hegel, the two religions share only the most superficial resemblance. Whereas Christianity expresses the proper relationship between the finite and the infinite, Hegel conceives of Indian religion as one of excessive differentiation and boundless extremes.[161] On the one side, it is excessively sensualistic and

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[156]Bernal, p. 294.
[157]Hegel, The Philosophy of History, p. 60.
[158]"The diffusion of Language and the formation of races lie beyond the limits of History." Ibid., p. 111.
[159]Ibid., p. 142.
[160]By contrast, Schlegel contended that the westward migrations out of India had far greater historical consequences than the colonizing operations of Greece and Rome; he thought that the greatest nations of the world "sprang from one stock, and that their colonies were all one people either directly or indirectly of Indian origin." Schlegel, "On the Language and Wisdom of the Indians," p. 505.
[161]Hegel, The Philosophy of History, p. 113.

hedonistic; its adherents indulge in the most debased sensual pleasures. But it is also overly ascetic, embodying an empty ideal of total renunciation and self-annihilation. These principles are also to be found in Indian philosophy since Indian religion and philosophy are identical.[162] The divorcing of the two, which comes about with the Greeks, is not yet present in the Orient. For the Romantics, the apparent unity of philosophy and religion was one of India's most attractive characteristics. But Hegel insists on the necessity of a cleavage between the two, the need for a separation between reason and revelation.

The confusion of philosophy and religion which characterizes Hinduism is juxtaposed by Hegel to the revelatory clarity of Christianity. He refers to Christianity as "the consummate, absolute religion in which it is manifest what spirit is, what God is".[163] A preference for Christianity is evident in many of Hegel's writings, particularly in his later works. Nevertheless, his relationship to Christianity is a subject of ongoing debate among scholars.[164] Hegel has been interpreted as being a theist, a pantheist, and even an atheist. The diversity of such interpretations notwithstanding, in *The Philosophy of History*, there is clear emphasis on the superiority of Christianity, particularly in its Protestant form, to all other religions. Hegel even states that the pre-eminence of "the Germanic peoples" is due to their exalted role as "the bearers of the Christian principle".[165]

Hegel was certain of the victory of this principle and the world which carried it forward, a certainty which is betrayed in his brief glances towards the future.

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[162]Hegel, Lectures on the History of Philosophy: Volume I: Greek Philosophy to Plato, translated by E.S. Haldane (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), p. 126.
[163]Hegel, Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion: Volume I: Introduction and the Concept of Religion, edited by P.C. Hodgson, translated by R.F. Brown, P.C. Hodgson, and J.M. Stewart (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1984), p. 183.
[164]C.J. Friedrich maintains that Hegel was a devout Lutheran. Conversely, Walter Kaufmann emphasizes the "un-Christian" elements of Hegel's thought, both in his youth and his later years. He says that Hegel would have made himself more intelligible if he had simply stated, "in God I do not believe; spirit suffices me". Kaufmann, Hegel: A Reinterpretation, pp. 271-275.
[165]Hegel, The Philosophy of History, p. 341.

Nevertheless, the argument that Hegel refrained from making predictions about the future is found very frequently in modern Hegel-scholarship. Even those Hegel-scholars who seem to able to agree about little else, concur that Hegel never deigned to engage in prognostications and contented himself with the study of the past.[166] The statement is corroborated by Hegel's own remark that future events lie outside the province of philosophical inquiry. It is also in agreement with his supposed emphasis on historical contingency, which many Hegel-scholars do not tire of emphasizing. Nevertheless, in his discussion on the relationship between Europe and the Orient, Hegel makes what can only be construed as a bold prediction of things to come. He asserts that it is the "necessary fate of Asiatic Empires to be subjected to Europeans".[167] This unduly neglected statement deserves further scrutiny precisely because it is not peripheral to Hegel's philosophy of history but is at the very heart of his understanding of the East-West relationship. By invoking the idea of necessity ("necessary fate"), Hegel is not merely throwing forth a probable conjecture about the future state of Asiatic Empires. His idea has all the force of a deduction. Perhaps, it is precisely the statement's ostensibly apodictic certainty which has discouraged scholars from inquiring into its dubious foundations. It rests on a belief in the ontological difference between Europe and Asia, a belief in the intrinsic superiority of Europe and the intrinsic inferiority of Asia.

In terms of cultural geography, Hegel's method of mapping foreign cultures is thus clear. The Greco-Roman world is placed close to the modern Germanic world since the latter is construed as bringing the inchoate political and religious principles

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[166] Very frequently, this characteristic of Hegel's has been invoked in order to differentiate Hegel and Marx, and also to castigate Marxism for its concern with future events.

[167] Ibid., p. 142. The assertion is made in the context of Hegel's description of the recent successes of the East India Company. In the German lectures, the sentence reads, "denn es ist das notwendige Schicksal der asiatischen Reiche, den Europäern unterworfen zu sein, und China wird auch einmal diesem Schicksale sich fügen müssen." Hegel, Vorlesungen Über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte, p. 365.

of the former to fruition. A belief in the close cultural proximity between the Classical World and modern Europe was not uncommon for the time. In Hegel's writings, it is accompanied by an attempt to distance Oriental cultures, namely China and India, while bringing modern Europeans closer together: "the European peoples form a family in accordance with the universal principle underlying their legal codes, their customs, and their civilization".[168] What is interesting about this statement is not simply Hegel's idea of a European family but the ties which are being appealed to for its existence. It is the European conception of law and right, its "legal codes" which Hegel thinks differentiates Europeans from non-Europeans. The primacy he accords to the political and legal state informs his representation of both Europe and its Others. Europe alone possesses the proper concept of political freedom and this sets its apart.

The centrality of the state in Hegel's philosophy distinguishes his representations of cultures from those of Herder and the early Romantics. Herder had emphasized the importance of linguistic bonds in sustaining culture and derided the state for its artificiality.[169] Naturally, as a philologist, Schlegel showed a similar attachment to language as a key for penetrating the spirit of a culture. Hegel's philosophy represents a shift of focus where the primary object of concern is the history of a culture's political constitution rather than its language.

The divergences between Hegel's and Schlegel's reflections on language, religion, and history account for their conflicting representations of India.[170] For the former, the deterioration of inflection in language is a desirable development which aids rational thinking; for the latter, it is indicative of despiritualization; for the

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[168]Hegel, Philosophy of Right, p. 297.

[169]Peter Hallberg, "The nature of collective individuals: J.G. Herder's concept of community," History of European Ideas, 25 (1999), pp. 298-299.

[170]The comparison made here is between Hegel and the early Schlegel, prior to his disillusionment with India. As Schlegel's ideas on language, history, and religion changed there were naturally corresponding changes in his representations of India.

former, religious truth advances side by side with the development of philosophical reflexiveness; for the latter, the primordial religious truth, once possessed by man, is continually obscured by the passage of time; for the former, history is a story of progress, the march of freedom; for the latter, it is a tragedy in which man has lost his original innocence and struggles to regain what once was his. The discrepancy in their cultural mapping, particularly in the manner in which they situate India, is a consequence of their antithetical conceptions of these nodal points of culture.

Hegel's conception of culture and his method of mapping cultures is obviously inimical to any idealization of India. His representation of India is shaped by a confluence of prejudices; historical, geographical, racial, political, and religious biases come together in his characterization of India and the Orient in general. The manner in which they are synthesized is a credit to Hegel's systematic way of thinking. They represent aspects of his thought which deserve to be interrogated further and have not received adequate attention from students of Orientalism.[171]

7. Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling (1775-1854)

In 1797, when still in his early twenties, Schelling received a position at Jena, which was then home to many of Germany's leading Romantics, including Novalis and the Schlegel brothers. In 1801, Hegel, with whom Schelling had attended the University of Tübingen, also arrived in Jena. Though close friends in their youth, the two men had already begun to drift apart by this time. Schelling was younger than Hegel, but he published much more quickly and his intellectual precocity was rewarded with renown and academic honours which at first eluded Hegel.

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[171] In Said's Orientalism, Hegel is not mentioned even once.

Initially known as the foremost disciple of Fichte in Germany, Schelling quickly established himself as a highly original philosopher in his own right. His identity philosophy, which he developed when he was only in his twenties, owed much to Fichte but also bore affinities to Spinozism. One of the fundamental features of Schelling's identity philosophy was its resistance to all dualisms, such as the Cartesian mind-matter dualism. Later, Schelling abandoned his early position in favour of what he termed his "positive philosophy", which attempted to establish "a philosophically viable religion" grounded in Christianity.[172]

Schelling's frequent interaction with the leading intellectuals of German Romanticism influenced his youthful philosophical speculations, but the Romantic fascination with India is only palely reflected in Schelling's writings. In his early thirties, he commented on the need for "a complete reconciliation of all European peoples and again a common connection with the Orient"; the need to look eastwards is expressed in his judgment that Europe is "a trunk unfruitful in itself" which requires the Orient to be "ennobled".[173] Yet it is unlikely that Schelling is here specifically thinking about India.

India never made as strong an impression on Schelling as it did on the other Romantics. He was unmoved by the *Bhagavad Gita* and he was critical of the *Oupnek'hat*.[174] Nevertheless, he was still aware of the major developments in Indological studies. In his lectures from 1803, he discussed the connection of Indian religion to Christianity, and he claimed that the former was closer to Christianity

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[172]Andrew Bowie, Schelling and Modern European Philosophy: An Introduction (New York, New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 13-14.

[173]Jean W. Sedlar, India in the Mind of Germany: Schelling, Schopenhauer and their Times (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America Inc., 1982), p. 42. Said claims that "The idea of regenerating a fundamentally lifeless Asia is a piece of pure Romantic Orientalism." But, as Schelling's remark above suggests, the fantasy which Said refers to was a fantasy not of Romanticism but rather of nineteenth-century liberalism. Said, Orientalism, p. 154.

[174]Sedlar, pp. 44-45.

than was the paganism of the ancient Greeks.[175] And according to Raymond Schwab, Schelling's encounter with the *Gita Govinda* was "an important event" in his intellectual development.[176] In his later years, Schelling even requested Max Müller to translate some of the *Upanishads* for him.[177] But the Orient which Schelling found most attractive was the biblical rather than the Vedic Orient. In his early adolescence, he had already achieved fluency in Hebrew and Arabic but he never took the trouble to learn Sanskrit.[178] The call towards India is only faintly heard in his writings, eclipsed by his affinity for Christianity.

Even so, his fascination with origins made him more amenable to the intellectual products of ancient India than was Hegel. But he also shared Hegel's notion of progressive historical stages of intellectual development. In his *System of Transcendental Idealism*, Schelling divided human history into three stages corresponding to different grades of human consciousness.[179] As in Hegel's system, each stage represents an advancement. But there is also an un-Hegelian nostalgia for the earliest stage of development, which betrays Schelling's Romantic attachment to origins.[180] The tension between Schelling's idea of intellectual progress and his nostalgia for the past colours his interpretation of Oriental cultures, especially where religion is concerned.

Schelling's religious leanings were instrumental in shaping his approach to India. His early identity philosophy contained strong pantheistic elements, and provoked some of his contemporaries, such as Jacobi, to accuse him of pantheism

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[175] Willson, p. 115.
[176] Schwab, p. 206.
[177] Sedlar, p. 44. Müller, who first met Schelling in 1845, was of the opinion that Schelling had great respect for ancient Indian literature.
[178] Schwab, p. 218.
[179] The three epochs are (1) "From Original Sensation to Productive Intuition", (2) "From Productive Intuition to Reflection", (3) "From Reflection to the Absolute". Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, System of Transcendental Idealism (1800), translated by Peter Heath (Charlottesville, Virginia: University Press of Virginia, 1978), p. viii.
[180] Willson, p. 115.

and even atheism.[181] The unorthodox religious convictions of his youth made him susceptible to Indian religion, if only for a brief time. And though Schelling always considered himself to be "a Christian philosopher", the presence of Christianity was certainly far more pronounced in his later works in which his religious ideas became more orthodox.[182] As with Hegel, Schelling's preference for Christianity above all other religions prevented him from treating other religious traditions impartially. For Schelling, all religions and mythologies which precede Christianity are a prelude which contain the inchoate germs that achieve fruition with Christianity's advent. But the manner in which these germs develop is of great concern to him. Consequently, in *The Ages of the World*, written between 1810 and 1815, Schelling included a section on the importance of the Old Testament "for tracing the concept of God", and he lamented the neglect of the study of the Old Testament in favour of the New.[183]

His discussion of Indian religions is thus more sympathetic than Hegel's, partly because of his Romantic attraction to origins but also because he takes the mythologies of other cultures more seriously than did Hegel, who excised all mythology from the purview of history. The difference between Schelling's and Hegel's conception of history and religion is clearly expressed in the former's lectures on the philosophy of mythology. Rather than separating mythology and history as Hegel had done, Schelling stated that mythology "has an essential relationship to the philosophy of history". [184] He argued in favour of the "systematic character" of mythology, and he believed that a scientific study of mythology could

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[181] Arthur Schopenhauer, The World as Will and Representation: Volume II, translated by E.F.J. Payne (New York, New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1969), p. 7.
[182] Sedlar, p. 69.
[183] Schelling, The Ages of the World, translated by Jason M. Wirth (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2000), pp. 49-51.
[184] "einen notwendigen Bezug auf die Philosophie der Geschichte hat". Schelling, Philosophie der Mythologie: Erster Band (Darmstadt, Germany: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1966), p. 241.

reveal important truths not only about human psychology but also about man's relationship to God.[185]

Not surprisingly, the aspect of India which attracted Schelling's greatest attention was its mythology and religion. Schelling was fascinated by the notion of a comparative mythology, modeled along the lines of comparative linguistics. It was an idea which was shared by other Romantic mythologists, namely Creuzer and Görres.[186] Schelling devoted the most attention to the subject in his *Philosophy of Mythology*, a monumental work which served as the foundation for a series of lectures Schelling delivered in Berlin in the early 1840s. Without challenging the primacy of Christianity, Schelling's comparative mythology yet broke down traditional barriers between the mythologies and religions of different cultures. By identifying the commonalties between different mythological traditions, European and non-European alike, Schelling disturbed the cultural map which placed Asia at a distance. But the disruption was minimal.

In his own study of the mythologies of other cultures, Schelling attempted to fit ancient myths into a philosophical system of potencies. In *The Ages of the World*, Schelling first propounded his theory of potencies, in which each potency represents a different moment in the dialectical development of the spirit.[187] According to Schelling, Indian mythology expresses the relationship of the potencies, albeit in a primitive and incomplete form.[188] Schelling states that the different deities of the Trimurti are personifications of the three gunas.[189] These deities, Brahma, Shiva, and Vishnu, are in turn identified by Schelling as corresponding to his three

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[185]Edward Allen Beach, The Potencies of God(s): Schelling's Philosophy of Mythology (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1994), p. 5.
[186]Schwab, p. 165.
[187]Schelling, The Ages of the World, pp. 30-36. The dialectical system of potencies which Schelling develops is based on a pattern of thesis-antithesis-synthesis.
[188]Schelling, Philosophie der Mythologie: Zweiter Band (Darmstadt, Germany: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1966), p. 460.
[189]Ibid., p. 449.

potencies. Brahma stands for the first potency, Shiva the second, and Vishnu the third.[190] Schelling's treatment of the Trimurti is characteristic of his analysis of world mythology in general. He tends to project his own philosophy onto the past. In Hinduism, the order of these deities does not correspond to Schelling's arrangement. Schelling was aware of the fact, but he chose to oppose the view of the leading Indologists of his time and advanced his own idiosyncratic interpretation.[191] As attested by this example, Schelling was less interested in receiving revelatory truths from India and was more concerned with fitting India into his own philosophical system.

Consequently, according to Jean W. Sedlar, although Schelling was acquainted with Indian literature through secondary sources and the translation of primary sources, his interest in India always remained "superficial".[192] And this is the reason why Sedlar is all the more struck by the depth of the affinities between Schelling's philosophy and Vedanta. Sedlar's sense of a likeness between German and Indian philosophy is not unusual. For example, A. Leslie Willson points to the similarities between Fichte's description of the "trance-like intuition of an immanent spirit of God" and the mystical state attained by Indian yogis.[193] To determine whether or not the aforementioned comparisons are legitimate would be to go far beyond the compass of the present work. More relevant would be a study of the occurrences of such comparisons in nineteenth-century intellectual discourse. Certainly, the impression that Schelling's, Fichte's, and even Kant's philosophy bore a resemblance to ancient Indian philosophy was felt by a number of their contemporaries, many of whom were not even German, such as Sir James

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[190] Ibid., pp. 442-446.
[191] Ibid., p. 448.
[192] Sedlar, p. 64.
[193] Willson, pp. 109-110.

Mackintosh, A.H. Anquetil-Duperron, and Madame de Stael.[194] The sense of a parallel between German Idealism and Vedanta helped to spur on German interest in India throughout the nineteenth century. In the 1890s, the German Indologist Paul Deussen even provided a comparative analysis of eastern and western philosophy, which linked Shankara to Plato and Kant.[195] Nevertheless, Schelling himself never made an explicit connection between Indian religion and his own philosophy. The first major German philosopher to do so was Schopenhauer.

8. Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860)

In Schopenhauer's philosophy, Indian religion is no longer a mere object of study as it was with Hegel and Schelling; rather, Schopenhauer integrates fundamental elements of Indian religious thought into his own philosophical system. The extent of this integration is apparent in the first preface to his magnum opus, *The World as Will and Representation*, where Schopenhauer states that a proper understanding of his philosophy is greatly facilitated by an acquaintance with three sources: Kant, Plato, and the *Upanishads*.[196]

Upon reading Kant, Schopenhauer experienced a veritable epiphany; he read Kant long before he developed any interest in India, and the encounter changed his life. To the end of his days, he considered himself to be both Kant's faithful pupil and the true heir to the Kantian tradition. His vitriol towards Fichte, Schelling, and especially Hegel was in no small part due to his sense that these men had failed to apprehend Kant's contribution to philosophy. But despite his professed Kantianism, Schopenhauer himself violated one of the most basic precepts of Kant's

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[194]Schwab, pp. 77, 206, 220. Schwab also contends that a proper history of nineteenth-century European philosophy will one day reveal the depth of Indian influences.

[195]Paul Deussen, Outlines of Indian Philosophy with an appendix On the Philosophy of the Vedanta in its Relations to Occidental Metaphysics (New Delhi, India: Ess Ess Publications, 1976), p. 57.

[196]Schopenhauer, The World as Will and Representation: Volume I, translated by E.F.J. Payne (New York, New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1969), pp. xv-xvi.

epistemology. Kant had divided the world up into phenomena and noumena (things-in-themselves); according to Kant, the latter were utterly unknowable. Schopenhauer, however, claimed, not unlike the other German Idealists, that he had discovered the true nature of the thing-in-itself. For Schopenhauer, the thing-in-itself was the Will or *der Wille zum Leben*.[197]

What was peculiar about Schopenhauer's assessment of the thing-in-itself was not simply his un-Kantian assessment of its knowability but the ethical imperative which he derived from it. Because Schopenhauer imagined that the thing-in-itself was also the source of all suffering, he concluded that it deserved to be negated.[198] Hence his verdict that nothingness is preferable to being. He provided his philosophy with a fitting appellation: pessimism. It was as much a sentiment as a philosophy, and it was this sentiment, which manifested itself at an early age, that Schopenhauer took with him in his first encounters with Indian philosophy.

Schopenhauer became acquainted with Indian thought in his early twenties through Friedrich Maier, an Indologist and pupil of Herder.[199] Schopenhauer caught Maier's infectious enthusiasm for India; he almost instantaneously felt that the major Indian religions shared the same pessimistic, life-denying outlook which was central to his own *Weltanschauung*. He was particularly attracted to Vedanta, and he began reading all the available current works on Hinduism by the leading Indologists of his time, including writings by the Schlegel brothers, Sir William Jones, Henry Thomas Colebrooke, and A.H. Anquetil-Duperron. It was through Anquetil-Duperron's *Oupnek'hat*, a Latin rendering of a Persian edition of the *Upanishads*, that Schopenhauer's interest in India was solidified. In his explanatory notes to the

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[197] Ibid., p. 275.
[198] Christopher Janaway, "Schopenhauer," in Keith Thomas (ed.), German Philosophers (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 319.
[199] Arthur Hübscher, Denker gegen den Strom: Schopenhauer: Gestern-Heute-Morgen (Bonn, Germany: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1973), p. 49.

Oupnek'hat, Anquetil-Duperron had pointed to the affinities between Kant's philosophy and Brahmanism, a similarity which no doubt would have intrigued the neo-Kantian Schopenhauer.[200] In the last decade of his life, Schopenhauer lauded the *Oupnek'hat* as "the most profitable and sublime reading that is possible in the world; it has been the consolation of my life and will be that of my death."[201] Such passionate praise may first appear to smack of Romanticism; indeed, in many passages, Schopenhauer rhapsodizes about the wisdom of the Indians in a way which recalls the musings of the Romantics; but the nature of Schopenhauer's attraction to India should not be confused with the nature of the Romantic attraction.

That which the Romantics had felt was most enchanting about India, its originary mystique, Schopenhauer found uninteresting. And that aspect of Indian culture which he believed most valuable, the religious and philosophical teachings, had been somewhat neglected by the Romantics. At the time of Schopenhauer's death in 1860, Indological studies were considerably more advanced than during the high-tide of Romanticism; consequently, Schopenhauer had access to a large body of primary and secondary sources regarding Indian philosophy and religion which were simply unavailable in the early 1800s. As more writings were published on India, the Romantic fascination with the mysticalness and mysteriousness of India was supplanted by a more scholarly approach, which Schopenhauer found more suitable.

As already stated, the chief source of the Romantic interest in India, and one of the defining aspects of the Romantic *Denkart*, was an obsession with origins.[202] Schopenhauer, on the other hand, showed as little of an interest in origins as did Hegel; he was admittedly impressed by the antiquity of India, but his disbelief in the

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[200]Richard King, Orientalism and Religion: Postcolonial Theory, India, and 'The Mystic East' (New York, New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 119.
[201] Schopenhauer, Parerga and Paralipomena, Volume II, translated by E.F.J. Payne (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 2000), p. 397.
[202]Ruprecht, pp. 7-8.

existence of a primordial Edenic state prevented him from conferring value on Indian culture simply because of its age. His interest in India resulted not from a fanciful image of the past but rather from a sober perception that his own philosophy of pessimism was akin to the religions of Buddhism and Brahmanism. His attachment to India was in reality an attachment to Indian religion and philosophy; he showed little patience for other elements of Indian culture, particularly Indian aesthetics. He shared Kant's and Goethe's aversion for Indian sculpture; he found little relish in Indian literary productions; in fact, Herder and even Goethe were more amenable to Indian poetic works.[203] Schopenhauer's own aesthetic tastes were perfectly classical; in this sense, he was also at odds with the Romantics, who felt more at home in the Middle Ages than in ancient Greece and Rome.

His notion that the highest aesthetic standard was to be sought for in ancient Greece was not by any means uncommon for his age but was almost the rule. Yet Schopenhauer's boundless admiration for the classical aesthetic was combined with a low estimate of Greco-Roman religion and philosophy.[204] Despite his admiration for Plato, he felt that the metaphysical philosophy of the ancients was shallow and superficial. His low opinion of ancient philosophy was extended to modern European philosophy, which likewise suffers from "a very great dearth of correct metaphysical views".[205] Schopenhauer's dissatisfaction with the dominant trends of the western philosophical tradition is manifested in the following passage on Bruno and Spinoza. He writes,

> they do not belong to their age or to their part of the globe, which rewarded the one with death and the other with persecution and ignominy. Their

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[203] Schopenhauer, Parerga and Paralipomena, Volume II, p. 395.
[204] Ibid., pp. 348-349.
[205] Ibid., p. 395.

> miserable existence and death in this Western world are like that of a tropical plant in Europe. The banks of the sacred Ganges were their true spiritual home; there they would have led a peaceful life among men of like mind.[206]

One cannot help but think that Schopenhauer himself fancied that he would have been more at home on the banks of the Ganges. But what is most interesting about this passage is not Schopenhauer's personal feelings of identification with the aforementioned philosophers. Rather, the fundamental point is that Schopenhauer is here subverting traditional European culture-mapping. Though he accepts the distance which separates Europe and India, his acceptance is accompanied by a reversal of values. The traditional hierarchy which places European philosophy above Indian philosophy is inverted. Moreover, in the aforementioned passage, Schopenhauer not only allows for the possibility that an individual from one culture may be more at home in another but he actually cites examples in which this is the case. This is partly due to Schopenhauer's essentialist belief in the universality of the human condition, a condition which transcends cultural differences. Schopenhauer's timeless notion of man is in direct opposition to the position advocated by Hegel, who continually emphasized the extent to which all individuals were conditioned by their specific historical circumstances.

Schopenhauer's unapologetically ahistorical way of thinking is decisive in determining his conceptions of other cultures. In large measure, the disparity between Hegel's and Schopenhauer's representations of India can be attributed to their antithetical understanding of history. One of Hegel's great contributions to philosophy was his wedding of philosophy and history. With Schopenhauer, the two are forcibly divorced.

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[206]Schopenhauer, The World as Will and Representation, Volume I, p. 422.

In the supplementary volume of *The World as Will and Representation*, Schopenhauer devoted a full section to history. His observations, however, are unlikely to be well received by most historians. His assertion that "more is achieved for knowledge of the true nature of mankind by poetry than by history" not only betrays a preference for the aesthetic over the factual but reveals a key feature of his philosophy as a whole.[207] Here, as elsewhere, Schopenhauer gives voice to his affinity for ideal types, a residue of Platonism. And since paradigmatic forms are obviously more frequently to be found in artistic productions rather than in history, Schopenhauer gives the latter short shrift. His observations on history are largely dismissals. But Schopenhauer did not limit himself to identifying the limitations of the historical discipline; he also applied himself to specifically refuting the historical dimension of "the Hegelian pseudo-philosophy", as he described it.[208] In combating Hegel, he directed all Hegelians to Plato, "who untiringly repeats that the object of philosophy is the unchangeable and ever permanent, not that which now is thus and then otherwise."[209]

Though Schopenhauer advocated an essentialist philosophy, he yet provided three penetrating objections to the Hegelian philosophy of history. First, Schopenhauer denied the existence of teleology in history, even though he embraced teleology elsewhere. He therefore repudiated the Hegelian notion that history progressed according to a rational plan. Second, Schopenhauer denied the ethical importance which Hegel had given to the state-apparatus. And finally, he criticized Hegel's emphasis on collectives, and his tendency to hypostatize cultures: "in the human race only the individuals and their course of life are real, the nations and their

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[207] Schopenhauer, The World as Will and Representation: Volume II, p. 439.
[208] Ibid., p. 442.
[209] Ibid., p. 443.

lives being mere abstractions".[210] On the basis of these dissimilarities, it is not difficult to understand why Hegel and Schopenhauer approached cultures, particularly non-European cultures, so differently.

Because Schopenhauer denied historical progression, he was more amenable to the cultural products of "primitive" cultures; he did not discount them summarily in the fashion of Hegel. However, he was also uncomfortable with Schlegel's Romantic theory of historical degeneration; he believed in neither Eden nor original revelation. But at times Schopenhauer does appear to forge a connection between antiquity and wisdom. He claims that in the early stages of the history of the human race, man possessed a more well-developed faculty for intuition.[211] Consequently, the most ancient of peoples, which Schopenhauer imagines to be the Indians, also formulated the most penetrating metaphysical insights. The high level of culture of the ancient Indians is also evinced by the grammar of Sanskrit. Schopenhauer explicitly employs the philological argument of linguistic degeneration (i.e. gradual loss of inflection) as evidence against the theory of progress, juxtaposing "the lofty Sanskrit" to "English jargon".[212] Elsewhere, Schopenhauer refers to Sanskrit as "the great mother language" out of which all lesser languages have descended.[213]

Nevertheless, the very nature of Schopenhauer's philosophy prevents him from falling into a Romantic infatuation with origins. As a neo-Kantian, he considers time, along with space, to be little more than a subjective form of representation which consequently gives rise to the phenomenal world. Since Schopenhauer is more interested in the world of the timeless thing-in-itself rather than in the time-bound phenomenal world, he attaches little value to both ancient origins (*contra* Schlegel)

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[210] Ibid., p. 442.
[211] Ibid., p. 162.
[212] Schopenhauer, Parerga and Paralipomena, Volume II, p. 565.
[213] Ibid., p. 530.

and future purposes (*contra* Hegel). India's lack of a strong historiographical tradition (as can be found among the Chinese, the Greeks, and the Romans) appears to him to be only proper. History is a mere report of the mutability of things; the sages of India rightly transcended the historical concern for the transient and ephemeral, and devoted themselves to the contemplation of that which is immutable. What Hegel had deemed to be one of India's most glaring intellectual failings and omissions is hailed by Schopenhauer as being a testament to its superior metaphysics.[214]

Ironically, Schopenhauer's lack of historical sensibility furnishes him with somewhat greater cultural sensitivity than is to be found in Hegel. Whereas Hegel's adulation of the state results in his dismissal of the contributions made by Oriental peoples because of the their poorly developed political constitutions, Schopenhauer's indifference to the state permits him to gauge the contributions of individuals while ignoring their immediate political circumstances. Whether or not Schopenhauer's interpretation of Indian culture is more accurate than Hegel's is subject to debate; it is certainly more sympathetic and less exclusionary.

The two men's differences on the subject of race further elucidate their conflicting approaches to India. Given Schopenhauer's professed Kantianism and his attachment to Platonic essences, one might suspect that he would subscribe to a rigid and essentialist conception of race. But Schopenhauer's reflections on race are at odds not only with Kant's but with those of nearly all his contemporaries. His understanding of racial categories consequently needs to be addressed because it sheds light on his receptivity to Indian culture.

In opposition to the race-theorists of his time, Schopenhauer claimed that "there is no white race, however much this is talked about, but every white human

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[214]Jean Paul also favourably assessed India's lack of written history. Willson, p. 119.

being is bleached".[215] Schopenhauer even identified white skin, blond hair, and blue eyes as being "almost an abnormality". Hegel, on the other hand, in his *Philosophy of Subjective Spirit*, maintained that the white skin colour was objectively superior to all others.[216]

Schopenhauer's denial of the naturalness of white skin was supplemented by an insistence that man naturally possessed a darker complexion, which Europeans alone had lost over time as a result of climatic and geographical factors. Hence, his assertion that Adam was black and his insistence that painters should depict him accordingly. His claim that "the white face is a degeneration" is advanced partly on the grounds of the reputed disgust that it causes Africans.[217] In his essay on *The Metaphysics of Sexual Love*, Schopenhauer also cites the nature of sexual attraction as evidence. He asserts that "in sexual love, nature strives to return to dark hair and brown eyes as the archetype".[218] Despite such musings on colour, Schopenhauer yet reproached others for using the complexion of the skin as a characteristic of racial classification.

Nevertheless, Schopenhauer was not free from prejudices against certain ethnic groups, primarily the Jews. And excepting the civilizations of the Indians and Egyptians, he believed that all higher cultures and civilizations had been produced by whites.[219] Schopenhauer showed great respect for Egypt, and he affirmed that the Greek philosophers Pythagoras and Plato learnt much from the Egyptians. But, like Schlegel before him, Schopenhauer imagined that Egyptian culture was actually of Indian origin.[220] And while acknowledging the difference in skin colour between

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[215] Schopenhauer, The World as Will and Representation, Volume II, p. 547.
[216] Rajan, p. 103.
[217] Schopenhauer, Parerga and Paralipomena, Volume II, pp. 156-158.
[218] Schopenhauer, The World as Will and Representation, Volume II, p. 547.
[219] Schopenhauer, Parerga and Paralipomena, Volume II, p. 158.
[220] Schopenhauer, Parerga and Paralipomena, Volume I, translated by E.F.J. Payne (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 2000), p. 39.

Indians and Europeans, Schopenhauer still referred to "our forefathers the Hindus".[221] An attachment to the notion of Indo-European propinquity was coupled with a virulent animosity towards the Jews.

Given the frequency and the intensity of Schopenhauer's criticisms of "the Jewish Nation", it is no wonder that Schopenhauer has at times been branded an anti-Semite.[222] But the imprecision of the designation becomes clear once one understands Schopenhauer's approach to race and religion. Schopenhauer is relentless in his criticisms of Judaism though he admits that what he deems to be the false tenets espoused by the Jews are partly excused by "the long and unjust oppression they have suffered".[223] Even so, it cannot be denied that Schopenhauer speaks disparagingly and prejudicially about the Jewish people; many of his comments are as thoughtless and untrue as those of anti-Semites proper; also, Schopenhauer's influence on anti-Semitic thought should not be downplayed. Despite his own disbelief in the racial categories of the *Jetztzeit*, his hostility towards Judaism was readily appropriated by German anti-Semites and thereby played an important role in perpetuating German racism.[224] Richard Wagner, Schopenhauer's most famous devotee, was instrumental in propagating the more dangerous and intolerant aspects of Schopenhauer's philosophy.

However, it needs to be remembered that Schopenhauer suffered from a religious and not a racialist prejudice. That his position was far from the one with which anti-Semites are traditionally associated is proven by his assertion that there is a great need for intermarriages between Jews and gentiles; such a suggestion is

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[221] Schopenhauer, The World as Will and Representation, Volume II, p. 547.
[222] Schopenhauer, Parerga and Paralipomena, Volume II, p. 263.
[223] Ibid., p. 263.
[224] Schopenhauer, however, felt no affinity whatsoever for German nationalism and was harshly critical of all forms of nationalist prejudice. He was, in Nietzsche's estimation, "a good European" like Goethe, Beethoven, Stendhal, and Heine. Friedrich Nietzsche, "Beyond Good and Evil," in Walter Kaufmann (ed.), Basic Writings of Nietzsche (New York, New York: Random House Inc., 2000), p. 386.

clearly anathema to anti-Semitism.[225] What Schopenhauer wished for was not to preserve the racial purity of the Aryan race (a thing in which he did not even believe), but rather to eliminate the Jewish faith through assimilation: a very objectionable objective motivated by religious rather than racial intolerance.

His desire that Europe should be liberated from the negative influences of Judaism was integrally related to his fervor for Indian religion. He hoped that modern-day Europeans, "the peoples of the Japhetic group of languages coming from Asia", would renounce Jewish dogma and return to the profession of the Indian faiths, "*the sacred religions of their native country*".[226] A proper understanding of Schopenhauer's attitude towards religion is thus indispensable for understanding not only his representations of India but also his criticisms of contemporary Europe.

Schopenhauer classified religions in a loose hierarchy. The chief criterion he used in assessing the value of a religion was its optimism/pessimism.[227] The most pessimistic religions are said to be of the highest grade while the most optimistic are of the lowest. According to Schopenhauer, whether a religion is theistic, polytheistic, or even atheistic is largely beside the point. It is the essential spirit of the religion, rather than its outward dogma, with which he concerns himself.

At the pinnacle of his hierarchy of religions, he locates the religions of India. Schopenhauer claims that the defining features of his own philosophy, its pessimism and idealism, can also be found in Brahmanism and Buddhism. He consistently showers these religions with the highest praise. For example, he describes the principles expounded in the *Vedas* and *Upanishads* as being "almost superhuman".[228] And his praise of Indian religious teachings is complemented by

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[225] Schopenhauer, Parerga and Paralipomena, Volume II, p. 263.
[226] Ibid., p. 226.
[227] Schopenhauer, The World as Will and Representation, Volume II, p. 170.
[228] Ibid., p. 162.

his praise of the practitioners of these religions. Though he reserves the highest praise for the Rishis of old, he expresses esteem for the present-day adherents of Brahmanism and Buddhism as well. The pessimism, asceticism, and compassion of Indian religion is what attracts Schopenhauer. He notes the existence of similar sentiments in Taoism, though Schopenhauer complains that Confucianism is dull, tedious, and more political than spiritual.[229]

Schopenhauer places Christianity below the major Indian religions in terms of its religious merit because it suffers from an admixture of Jewish elements. Nevertheless, he contends that the true spirit of Christianity is pessimistic and, therefore, Indic. Schopenhauer even suggests that the fundamental teachings of Christ are Indian in origin.[230] But there is much in Christianity to which Schopenhauer is opposed. He objects to Christianity's lack of respect for animal life, its dependence on history, its belief in a personal god, its doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*, and its intolerance towards other faiths. He attributes these failings to the presence of Jewish elements. Naturally, he does not find any of these errors present in Brahmanism or Buddhism. Because he imagines Christianity to be a fragmentary and adulterated form of Buddhism, he scoffs at missionaries in India. He claims that missionaries have only proven successful when encountering primitive peoples "still in a state of childhood", among which he includes Hottentots and the inhabitants of Polynesia.[231] These proselytizers are, however, impotent when faced with the superior culture and religion of the Brahmins.

He compares the work of the missionaries in India to the futile task of shooting a cliff with a bullet. His argument on the inefficacy of Christians

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[229]Schopenhauer, On the Will in Nature, edited by David E. Cartwright, translated by E.F.J. Payne (Oxford, England: Berg Publishers Inc., 1992), p. 130.
[230]Schopenhauer, On the Basis of Morality, translated by E.F.J. Payne (Providence, Rhode Island: Berghahn Books, 1995), p. 178.
[231]Schopenhauer, Parerga and Paralipomena, Volume II, p. 328.

proselytizing in India is bolstered by citations of British statistics on the lack of Indian converts. He assures his readers that Christianity will not supplant the religions of India; rather, Schopenhauer observes that "Indian wisdom flows back into Europe" and he predicts that it "will produce a fundamental change in our knowledge and thought".[232]

At the bottom of Schopenhauer's religious hierarchy are Judaism and Islam. Schopenhauer derides these religions for their realism, optimism, and intolerance. Disparaging references to Judaism are to be found sprinkled throughout Schopenhauer's writings. He has little respect for the *Old Testament* and he refers to the *Koran* as a "wretched book", which represents theism at its very worst.[233] He understands Islam to be a variety of Judaism, but he is still kinder to the latter than the former. He calls the Biblical story of the Fall the one "redeeming feature" of Judaism, insofar as the story contains the allegorical seed of pessimism; but because he considers Islam to be even more optimistic than Judaism, he dubs it "the worst of all religions".[234] Schopenhauer says that the spirit of Islam is related to the spirit of Greek and Roman paganism, which are likewise permeated with a metaphysically shallow optimism.

In his cultural mapping, Schopenhauer's attitude towards the different world religions is decisive because, for Schopenhauer, religion constitutes the fundamental cultural node. He divides and assesses cultures primarily along religious lines. Thus, despite the geographical distance which separates western Europe and India, Schopenhauer argues that they share a certain kinship since the dominant religion of Europe, Christianity, and the religions of India are both intrinsically pessimistic. Moreover, they are genetically related. And while India is referred to as the "native

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[232]Schopenhauer, The World as Will and Representation, Volume I, p. 335.
[233]Schopenhauer, The World as Will and Representation, Volume II, p. 162.
[234]Ibid., p. 605.

country" of Europeans, Schopenhauer portrays the Jewish influence on European culture as something foreign. He even goes so far as to refer to the Jews as "a foreign oriental race".[235]

In calling for Europeans to return to "the original native religion of our race", by which he means the religious tradition of India, Schopenhauer was effecting a small transformation in German cultural geography.[236] The linguistic division which German philologists made between Indo-Europeans and Semites was extrapolated by Schopenhauer.[237] What Schlegel accomplished for language, Schopenhauer did for religion. A new religious division, augmenting the linguistic division, was introduced by Schopenhauer which cut through Europe, isolating the Jews, and joining India to Germany.

In his criticisms of the "Judaized West", Schopenhauer urged his contemporaries to look towards India in order to rediscover the genuine, pessimistic principles of Christianity.[238] The difference with Hegel is obvious. Both men appeal to Christianity as being fundamental to western culture and to their own philosophical systems, but their understanding of Christianity's relationship to eastern religions has little in common. Hegel concentrates on the dissimilarities, Schopenhauer on the similarities; in the first case, India is distanced; in the second, it is brought closer to the West.

Schopenhauer's notion of a connection between Europe and India has an affinity with Schlegel's. For one, both men are united by an antipathy to Hegelianism and to the strict division which Hegel set up between Orient and Occident. But whereas Schlegel became disillusioned with India following a brief period of

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[235] Schopenhauer, Parerga and Paralipomena, Volume II, p. 264.
[236] Schopenhauer, On the Basis of Morality, p. 144.
[237] Schopenhauer, Parerga and Paralipomena, Volume II, p. 578.
[238] Ibid., p. 222.

unreasoning enthusiasm, Schopenhauer maintained an interest in India throughout his life. His attachment to India and the influence it exercised on his thought increased rather than diminished with time. In charting the influences of Brahmanism and Buddhism on Schopenhauer's philosophy, it is even possible to uncover how Schopenhauer's idea of the thing-in-itself underwent modifications in the last decade of his life as a result of a better acquaintance with Indian philosophy.[239] By incorporating aspects of Indian religious thought into his own system, Schopenhauer broke away from traditional European philosophy. But like the Romantics before him, he pointed the way towards an Oriental source for Europe's intellectual and spiritual rejuvenation: "*Ex oriente lux.*"[240]

9. Karl Marx (1818-1883)

It is understandable that many non-European nationalist movements seeking liberation from European colonialism have looked towards Marx for guidance and inspiration. Though Herder and Schopenhauer lamented the deleterious consequences of European imperialism and expressed grief at the misfortunes of non-Europeans at the hands of Europeans, neither one offered a solution to this problem. Herder's understanding of resistance was vitiated by his notion of intrinsic cultural difference; Schopenhauer, in the spirit of quietism, passively accepted the inevitability of such suffering and advised others to accept likewise. Marx, on the other hand, offered a compelling political program for the universal liberation of the oppressed. And yet, paradoxically, his philosophy is far more Eurocentric than either Herder's or Schopenhauer's.

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[239] Nicholls, p. 196.
[240] Schopenhauer, Parerga and Paralipomena, Volume I, p. 54.

Marx, the archetypal left-Hegelian, was immersed in Hegel's writings from an early age. However, he never passively accepted Hegel's philosophy but was always alert to the possibility of utilizing it in the development of his own political theorizing. In his famous preface to *Capital*, Marx claimed that his philosophy was the direct antithesis of Hegel's insofar as the former was materialistic and the latter idealistic. Hegel's philosophy was "standing on its head" but Marx set it "right side up again".[241] Despite Marx's audacious claim, his understanding of historical development generally and the historic East-West relationship specifically owes much to Hegel's philosophy and even presupposes it. The commonalties between Marx's and Hegel's representations of India are striking though, given Marx's intellectual heritage, not surprising.

Marx's earliest significant writings on India consist of a series of articles published for the *New York Daily Tribune* in the early 1850s. Of all the writings which Marx published during his lifetime, these brief articles contain some of the most detailed references to India. In his 1853 article *The British Rule in India*, his description of India both in its content and its structure is perfectly Hegelian. Almost imitating Hegel's *Philosophy of History*, Marx begins his analysis of India with a brief overview of India's geographical position and a reflection on how India's geography is indicative of the Indian spirit. He draws a direct parallel between the geography of India and Italy, but he also notes the existence of a more profound conditional similarity between India and Ireland. And so, he dubs India "an Italy of Asiatic dimensions" but also "the Ireland of the East".[242]

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[241]Karl Marx, Capital, translated by Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling (London, England: Swan, Sonnenschein, Lowrey, & Co., 1943), p. xxx.

[242]Marx, Surveys from Exile, edited by David Fernbach, translated by Ben Fowkes and Paul Jackson (London, England: Random House Inc., 1973), p. 301.

Marx claims that these two facets of India are expressed in the Indian religious tradition, which is one of extremes. He describes Hinduism in particular as "a religion of sensualist exuberance" but also "self-torturing asceticism".[243] The well-worn trope of Oriental extremism, specifically attached to Indian religion, is uncritically taken from Hegel. Also adopted by Marx is a fierce contempt for Indian pantheism, which Marx considers to be a "brutalizing form of worship".[244] Of course; his attitude towards the western religious tradition is also unsympathetic; Hegel's praise of Christianity is not to be found in Marx. His criticisms of "European state Protestantism" are incisive, and his attacks on Judaism, particularly in *On the Jewish Question*, are positively scathing.[245] Marx's antipathy to religion in general is well-known, but he reserves some of his fiercest criticisms for Indian religion. He states that India's religious tradition, like the religious traditions of all other non-European cultures, is only suitable to a very primitive stage of political and social development.[246] Marx thereby rules out the possibility of the spread of eastern spirituality in Europe, as desired by Schopenhauer and the Romantics. Marx contends that Asian culture has nothing to offer Europe, nothing to teach Europe.

The portrayal of the British activity in India clearly reveals Marx's prejudice against non-European cultures. Marx acknowledges that British trade and conquest in India are motivated by "the vilest interests" and are executed in a "stupid" fashion; but Marx excuses the crimes which England has perpetrated against the Indian people since England is, after all, only an "unconscious tool of history" fulfilling an unfortunate but necessary historical role.[247] In fact, Marx is so passionately committed to the destruction of Indian political institutions and, by extension,

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[243] Ibid., p. 301.
[244] Ibid., p. 306.
[245] Trevor Ling, Karl Marx and Religion in Europe and India (London, England: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1980), pp. 12-17.
[246] Ibid., p. 72.
[247] Marx, Surveys from Exile, p. 307.

traditional Indian culture that he cannot help but admire British successes. He asserts that the British role in India is constituted by a "double mission": "the annihilation of old Asiatic society and the laying of the material foundations of Western society in Asia".[248] The destruction of Asian cultures is the indispensable prerequisite of the proletarianization of the Indian masses; it is the *sine qua non* of the Marxist world-revolution.

According to Marx, the category of class supersedes the categories of race and nation. Stressing the primacy of class antagonisms, and interpreting national antagonisms as secondary manifestations of class antagonisms, Marx offers an internationalist vision which cuts across traditional national boundaries. He argues that workers from different cultures have more in common with one another than they have with their own employers. But the imperative, urging the workers of the world to unite, is less ecumenical than it may first appear. Those countries which do not have workers proper (proletarians) are incapable of participating in the revolution. Before any social revolution can be brought about, the oppressed peoples of India must first exchange their native oppressors for European oppressors, who are required in order to introduce a more advanced mode of production. As Marx himself observes, the British have not just introduced "the greatest" social revolution but "the only social revolution" in Asia.[249]

A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, published in 1859, buttressed Marx's earlier assessment of the static nature of India through his invocation of the socio-economic concept of the Asian mode of production.[250] However, in his *Notes on Indian History*, written circa 1880, Marx proved to be

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[248] Ibid., p. 320.
[249] Ibid., p. 306.
[250] Brendan O'Leary, The Asiatic Mode of Production (Oxford, England: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1989), p. 104.

more sensitive to the development of social changes in Indian history than he had been the past. He provided a chronology of developments within Indian society following the arrival of the Muslims, and he recognized the existence of changes in the concept of property in India. However, Marx's early and later analysis of India share three fundamental features in common: first, the idea that the caste system is a primitive and static socio-political formation under which there has existed no internal social development; second, the idea that the dissolution of the caste system is indispensable as a means of economic progress; and, finally, the notion that all progress in Indian history is attributable to foreigners, first to the Muslims and then to the British.[251]

Marx's depiction of India as a perfectly passive object, "the predestined prey of conquest", which must wait for foreigners to impregnate it with history is an image which was common in nineteenth-century British discourse on India.[252] It was, however, most forcefully expressed by Hegel and it is on Hegel's authority that Marx makes such pronouncements. The ostensible immutability of the caste system leads Marx to the very Hegelian conclusion that "Indian society has no history at all" and that it remains Europe's task to introduce history to India.[253] Thus, his criticisms of British activities in India are always tempered by his satisfaction at the dissolution of the old Indian political constitution. And since Marx, as a progressivist, is unimpressed by India's antiquity and explicitly denies the existence of "a golden age of Hindustan", the end of Indian culture is no loss.[254] The belief in progress, shared by Hegel, Marx, and the British Whigs, forestalls any romanticization of India at the outset. Marx gives the lie to Romanticism, and his

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[251]Marx focuses almost exclusively on Indian history after the Muslim invasions. See Marx, Notes on Indian History (664-1858) (Moscow, USSR: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1947).
[252]Marx, Surveys from Exile, p. 319.
[253]Ibid., p. 320.
[254]Ibid., p. 301.

nod of assent to progress, when he writes in the *Grundrisse* that "A man cannot become a child again, or else he becomes childish." [255]

In Marx's approach to the study of other cultures, politics and history constitute the two fundamental cultural nodes and they are melded together in his theory of progress. Compared to Hegel, he is far less concerned with the role of race, language, and religion in defining culture. The historical development of political institutions, economic modes of production, and social conditions constitute the focus of Marx's analysis of culture. Other features of culture are to be derived from them. For example, in *Capital*, Marx asserts that "the simplicity of the organization of production" provides "the key to the secret of the unchangeableness of Asiatic societies."[256]

And so, despite his own penetrating criticisms of British imperialists, Marx's representations of India resemble theirs in so many ways. Like the former, he viewed the present state of Europe as the highest stage of historical development hitherto achieved; India, on the other hand, had failed to advance and was in dire need of European social, political, and economic reform. His portrayal of India thus has more in common with J.S. Mill's than with J.G. Herder's. And like Mill, in explaining the successes of the British, Marx invokes both the political and the cultural superiority of the British. India's previous conquerors were all assimilated but the British could not be "*Hinduized*" because they were culturally superior to their subjects.[257] The European bourgeoisie is too advanced to be seduced by Oriental culture.

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[255] "Ein Mann kann nicht wieder zum Kind werden, oder er wird kindisch." Marx, Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie (Berlin, Germany: Dietz Verlag GmbH, 1953), p. 31.
[256] Marx, Capital, p. 352.
[257] Marx, Surveys from Exile, p. 320.

Marx's praise of the successes of the bourgeoisie and of modern European economic productivity are colourfully expressed in *The Communist Manifesto.* Though Marx's criticisms of the bourgeoisie are universally known, his admiration of the provisional progressiveness and productivity of the aforementioned class are often unacknowledged; a recognition of this dimension of Marx's philosophy is fundamental to any understanding of his representations of the Orient.

Marx marvels at the strides which the European bourgeoisie has made in such a short span of time, strides which dwarf the advances made by all previous cultures and classes, "wonders far surpassing Egyptian pyramids, Roman aqueducts and Gothic cathedrals".[258] The first section of the manifesto in particular, devoted to the Bourgeoisie, is essential in understanding Marx's conception of Europe's relationship vis-à-vis Asia. Marx here acknowledges the advances which this class, a class which has arisen in Europe alone, has made. Of course, because *The Communist Manifesto* is among Marx's earlier works and because it is a political pamphlet, it cannot be taken for his last word on any subject. Nevertheless, Marx's basic idea, expressed in the manifesto, on the relative progressiveness of the bourgeoisie compared to previous ruling classes is one which he never abandoned. In fact, it is at the heart of his later theory of economics and history. In combating the reactionaries of his time, Marx pointed out the degree to which the bourgeoisie had not only initiated important economic changes but had advanced European culture by breaking down old superstitions. But in criticizing the backwardness of older European ruling classes Marx was also attacking the political systems of contemporary non-European societies. His praise of the bourgeoisie's erosion of

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[258]Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, The Communist Manifesto, translated by Samuel Moore (Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin Books Ltd., 1969), p. 83.

these foreign cultures is vividly expressed in one of the manifesto's most well-known passages. Marx writes,

> The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarian, nations into civilization. The cheap prices of its commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batters down all Chinese walls, with which it forces the barbarians' intensely obstinate hatred of foreigners to capitulate.[259]

Marx's description of Europe's historically inevitable penetration of Asia, here and elsewhere, is reminiscent of Hegel's. But Marx draws an un-Hegelian conclusion about the possible outcome of the encounter between European and Asian peoples. The significant difference, and it is no small difference, between the Hegelian and the Marxist position on India pertains to India's future. Hegel did not offer a political program for future action.[260] He did however state that India was destined to be conquered by Europeans; whether or not it would remain in the hands of Europeans indefinitely is a question which he never explicitly addressed. Marx concurred with Hegel that India's subjection to foreigners was inevitable. He states that if the British had not taken India, the Russians or some other power would have.[261] According to Marx, India is made for thralldom. But he also expresses a hope, which sometimes reaches the level of certainty, that the yoke of British rule in India will be cast off by the Indian himself.

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[259] Ibid., p. 84.
[260] Jean Hyppolite, Introduction to Hegel's *Philosophy of History* (Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida, 1996), p. 70.
[261] Marx, Surveys from Exile, pp. 319-320.

In speaking of the future of India, Marx suddenly begins to praise its people; he does so by comparing them to Europeans: the Indians "represent the type of the ancient German in the Jat and the type of the ancient Greek in the Brahmin".[262] Once again, the connection German philologists forged between India, Greece, and Germany manifests itself. But, as with Hegel, it quickly fades away superseded by a Eurocentric vision of culture. Still, Marx urges on the Indian working class in its coming struggle against the British bourgeoisie. He simultaneously praises the advances of the British in India precisely because they are hastening their own demise; they are producing their own grave-diggers, the Indian proletariat.

This Marxist vision of the liberation of the oppressed is obviously more universal than Hegel's but Marx extricates himself from none of Hegel's cultural prejudices. As it was for Hegel, for Marx, India is distant, static, backwards, and inferior. It does not have history (like the West); it does not have freedom (like the West). In Marx's cultural-geographical vision, there is a sharp divide between India and Europe. Yet Marx retains a belief in the possibility of India's socio-political redemption, in its liberation from despotism, in its entrance into world-history. But the condition for such a transformation is the destruction of Indian culture itself. True, India can be redeemed but at a price. First, it must be Europeanized.

10. Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900)

Nietzsche employed the East as a weapon to combat those elements of the West which he found objectionable. His shifting attitudes towards India are inseparable from his critique of nineteenth-century Germany. Whereas Marx identified progress with the spreading of European values, institutions, and modes of production, Nietzsche repudiated the notion of progress altogether. His interest in the

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[262] Ibid., p. 324.

cultivation of superior men shaped his approach towards other cultures, and in the search for humanity's highest types, his gaze was not limited to Germany but encompassed Europe and much of Asia as well.

Nietzsche was never favourable to the German nationalism which gained so much momentum during his lifetime. He was in his own words "a good European". In his youth, he discovered his ideal in the antique world, particularly in ancient Greece. This was only natural considering the nature of his early education. In 1858, he enrolled at the prestigious Pforta school, where the study of classical languages was the primary concern. Like the Schlegel brothers before him, who had also attended Pforta, Nietzsche quickly developed an interest in the possibility of a new cultural renaissance in Europe at large and Germany in particular.[263] His pan-Europeanism was attended by a distaste for petty German nationalism. In the 1880s, the last productive decade of his life, Nietzsche's idea of European unity surfaced with increasing frequency and intensity in his writings. But his pan-Europeanism did not result in a deprecatory treatment of non-European cultures; on the contrary, his antipathy was directed rather to the wayward path which modern Europe was taking. In studying other cultures, Nietzsche sought for correctives to guide the Europe of his day.

In one of his earliest published writings, *On the Utility and Liability of History for Life*, Nietzsche articulated a position which was explicitly anti-Hegelian. He ridiculed Hegel's philosophy of history for its unabashed favoring of the present time: "for Hegel the apex and the culmination of the world process coincided with his own existence in Berlin".[264] Whether or not Nietzsche's sardonic judgment of

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[263]Walter Kaufmann, Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1968), p. 22.

[264]Nietzsche, Unfashionable Observations, edited by Ernst Behler, translated by Richard T. Gray (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1995), p. 143.

Hegel's position is accurate is beside the point. What is certain is that Nietzsche had little patience for the Hegelian theory of progress and others like it. For Nietzsche, history itself was without a purpose, and like Goethe, he contended that the study of history had a purpose only insofar as it stimulated to further activity. As Hayden White observes, Nietzsche was critical of the attempt "both to explain history and to emplot it as a drama with any general meaning".[265] Since this attempt constitutes the essence of the Hegelian philosophical project, it is natural that Nietzsche's views on the history of cultures differ profoundly from Hegel's. Nietzsche's reflections on the different types of history ("*monumental*", "*antiquarian*", and "*critical*") show that his chief concern was not with history itself but with history only to the degree to which it was useful for life.[266] This principle made Nietzsche far more open to looking at the past and at other cultures for inspiration. Hegel had explicitly denied that one could learn to live in the present through the study of the past, but Nietzsche's belief that the man of antiquity and the man of the Renaissance represent superior types also suggests that much can be learned from these men.

Following a critique of those who imagine history to be a purposeful process, Nietzsche explains that "the goal of humanity cannot possibly be found in its end stage, but only in its highest specimens."[267] This verdict constitutes one of the distinguishing features of Nietzsche's elitism. His primary interest is not in collectives but in individuals. For Hegel, individuals are primarily means to an end, instruments in a greater process. Nietzsche reverses this relationship. What the state is for Hegel, the superman is for Nietzsche.[268] The justification of a collective or any social group is to be sought in its success in producing superior individuals.

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[265]Hayden White, Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), p. 373.
[266]Nietzsche, Unfashionable Observations, p. 96.
[267]Ibid., p. 151.
[268]Karl Brose, Kritische Geschichte: Studien zur Geschichtsphilosophie Nietzsches und Hegels (Frankfurt am Main, Germany: Peter Lang, 1978), p. 9.

The form of Nietzsche's elitism has far-reaching repercussions in his evaluation of cultures. Those socio-political systems which, according to Nietzsche, facilitate the development of superior types are accorded the highest honors; hence Nietzsche's disdain for democracy and its leveling impulse. Against the progressivists of his time, Nietzsche championed aristocratism and the cause of the nobility precisely because it maintained a belief in the inequality of men. Nietzsche argued that an instinctive belief in the "order of rank" was itself a sign of nobility.[269] And his contempt for the so-called "herd" was accompanied by an indictment of modern liberalism and socialism, which through their commitment to equal rights erode the hierarchical structure of society which is the prerequisite of every higher culture.[270] His obsession with nobility, in the political and the spiritual sense, drew him towards both classical antiquity and Asia. Among those cultures which believe in a strict "order of rank", Nietzsche included the Indians, Greeks, Persians, and Muslims.[271] These peoples appealed to Nietzsche because of their conservatism, their inegalitarianism. In fact, when he refers to Europe as Asia's "protruding little peninsula", he does so in order to alert his contemporaries to the parochiality of their belief in the superiority of European modernity.[272]

Though Nietzsche's ideas have rightly been seen as politically dangerous to the existence of modern institutions (a judgment Nietzsche himself would embrace), they may also facilitate a more sympathetic interpretation of certain non-European cultures. The notion of nineteenth-century European liberals that democracy, in some form or another, furnished the ideal political system almost invariably resulted in condescension towards the political government of other cultures. The

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[269]Nietzsche, "Beyond Good and Evil," p. 232.
[270]Nietzsche's antipathy to the politics and culture of his time is expressed in his judgment that "*Morality in Europe today is herd animal morality*". Ibid., p. 305.
[271]Ibid., p. 232.
[272]Ibid., p. 225.

condescension is equally apparent in the writings of nineteenth-century European radicals such as Marx. But since Nietzsche was a political elitist he was less inclined to subscribe to the type of modern European cultural elitism favoured by many of his contemporaries. A mixture of political conservatism and admiration for India was actually not uncommon in Germany in the late nineteenth century. In fact, the confluence is even present in the writings of some old-fashioned British conservatives such as Edmund Burke, who held the elitist institutions of the Brahmins in high regard and referred to the Brahmins themselves as "an ancient and venerable priesthood".[273] Ironically, the liberal notion of progress tended to be more inimical to cultural pluralism than older conservative sentiments.

Nietzsche even suggested that specific Oriental customs ought to be adopted by Europeans. For example, his rabid opposition to the feminist movement of his time led him to the conclusion that there was a need for a revival of intolerant Asiatic practices in order to curtail the democratizing emasculation of European culture. He insisted that modern man "must always think about women as *Orientals* do"; "he must base himself on the tremendous reason of Asia, on Asia's superiority in the instincts, as the Greeks formerly did, who were Asia's best heirs and students".[274] When Nietzsche mentions Asia here, he is most probably thinking of Persia, the Near East, and even Egypt. But like Schlegel and other German philologists, Nietzsche also believed in the existence of a connection between Greece and India.

Nietzsche was trained as a philologist, and his reflections on the relationship between language, philosophy, and culture are partly explicable in terms of his philological heritage. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche claimed that "the strange

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[273]Rajan, p. 241.
[274]Nietzsche, "Beyond Good and Evil," p. 357.

family resemblance of Indian, Greek, and German philosophizing" was due to grammatical similarities.[275] Nietzsche's understanding of Indian philosophy may also owe something to the work of Paul Deussen. Nietzsche was personally acquainted with Deussen, an Indologist and disciple of Schopenhauer.[276] In his published work, Nietzsche drew specifically on Deussen's ideas about India and praised him as "the first European *expert* in Indian philosophy".[277] In line with Schopenhauer, Deussen maintained that there was an equivalence between Vedanta, Plato, and Kant. Nietzsche, of course, read Deussen's work, and he was amenable to the latter's favourable representation of India. Nietzsche's esteem for Indian philosophy is apparent in his comparison of British and Indian philosophy. He refers to India and England as "the antithetical poles of philosophical endowment".[278] Such high praise for India is coupled with a judgment of British philosophy which is especially harsh: "they are no philosophical race, these Englishmen. . . they signify a debasement and lowering of the value of the concept of 'philosophy'".[279]

In comparing and assessing the contributions of different cultures, Nietzsche not infrequently appealed to the existence of race and racial differences. However, his ideas on race remain a subject of controversy. Thanks largely to the work of Walter Kaufmann, Nietzsche is no longer viewed in the English-speaking world as a racist proto-Nazi. But even though Nietzsche certainly did not subscribe to the crude racism of his contemporaries, he was nevertheless fascinated by the problem of "blood" as both his published and unpublished writings attest. For Nietzsche,

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[275] Ibid., p. 217.

[276] Deussen was actually led to Schopenhauer's philosophy through Nietzsche's recommendation, but he developed a far deeper interest in Indian religion than Nietzsche ever did. Freny Mistry, Nietzsche and Buddhism: Prolegomenon to a Comparative Study (Berlin, Germany: Walter de Gruyter, 1981), p. 16.

[277] Nietzsche, "On the Genealogy of Morals," in Walter Kaufmann (ed.), Basic Writings of Nietzsche (New York, New York: Random House Inc., 2000), p. 569.

[278] Ibid., p. 542.

[279] Nietzsche, "Beyond Good and Evil," p. 379. Though Nietzsche considered himself a "good European", England was one European country for which Nietzsche showed very little respect. He claimed that just as Europe owed all its "*noblesse*" to France, England was the source of all "European vulgarity". Ibid., p. 382.

however, the concept of blood/race is intimately related to the concept of caste or class.

Nietzsche holds the "noble races" in high regard; they are distinguished, he says, by their untamed barbarism, their rapaciousness, and their strength and will to dominate others. These predatory and bellicose "noble races" include "the Roman, Arabian, Germanic, Japanese nobility, the Homeric heroes, the Scandinavian Vikings."[280] The list indicates that for Nietzsche the concept of race has as much to do with class as ethnicity. In Nietzsche's terminology, the ruling class is often referred to as the ruling race, as if it were ethnically distinct from the masses which it governs. At first sight this may appear to be similar to Arthur de Gobineau's racialism but the differences are pronounced. In the classification to which Nietzsche subscribes, the concept of nobility cuts through, rather than reaffirms, more traditional racial divisions. Marx had argued that workers from one culture have more in common with workers from another than they do with their own bosses; Nietzsche made a similar claim for the kinship of all nobility. But Marx never spoke in favour of the cultural similitude of all workers but only of the likeness of their socio-economic circumstances. Nietzsche, on the other hand, by invoking the distinction between "master morality" and "slave morality", was able to present a case for the existence of a common cultural nobility, which, even if not genetically related, spiritually relates elites in different climes and times.[281] The idea finds an overtly political expression in Nietzsche's idea of an internationalist master-race.[282]

According to Nietzsche, the peoples of India are not among the conquering noble races. Nietzsche imagines that the Indian is not vital and barbarous but, on the

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[280]Nietzsche, "On the Genealogy of Morals," pp. 476-477.
[281]Nietzsche, "Beyond Good and Evil," pp. 394-398.
[282]In a rough note, composed around 1885, Nietzsche wrote of "international racial unions whose task will be to rear a master race". Nietzsche, The Will to Power, edited by Walter Kaufmann, translated by Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale (New York, New York: Random House Inc., 1968), p. 504.

contrary, suffers from exhaustion and enervation. At one point, he suggests that bad dietary practices, namely the excessive intake of rice, have led to this condition.[283] This physiological exhaustion manifests itself in the perpetuation of a life-denying philosophy. Nietzsche's assessment has an affinity with Hegel's depiction of the character and spirit of the enervated Indian. But out of this physiological state, Nietzsche sees the emergence of a most fruitful development. In his ascetic withdrawal from the world, the Indian initiates the path towards philosophy. Thus, Nietzsche alludes to "the ancient Brahmins" as "the earliest philosophers".[284] They are lacking the savage strength which distinguishes the more warlike races but the Brahmins have the distinction of being the first priestly race, with all the concomitant virtues which belong to the more contemplative and meditative man. It is also among the Brahmins that the idea of a spiritual elite receives its most lofty expression. Nietzsche says of the Brahmins that "by means of a religious organization they gave themselves the power of nominating the kings of the people while they themselves kept and felt apart and outside, as men of higher and supra-royal tasks."[285]

The idea of a spiritual elite proved to be very attractive to Nietzsche as did the idea of a caste system, which offered a systematic way to cultivate an elite.[286] In his reflections on the "breeding of a particular race or kind", Nietzsche stated in *The Twilight of the Idols* that "the most magnificent example of this is furnished by Indian morality".[287]

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[283]Nietzsche, The Gay Science, translated by Walter Kaufmann (New York, New York: Vintage Books, 1974), p. 186.
[284]Nietzsche, "On the Genealogy of Morals," p. 551.
[285]Nietzsche, "Beyond Good and Evil," p. 263.
[286]Daniel W. Conway, "'The Great Play and Fight of Forces': Nietzsche on Race," in Julie K. Ward and Tommy L. Lott (eds.), Philosophers on Race (Oxford, England: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 2002), pp. 177-178.
[287]Nietzsche, "Twilight of the Idols," in Walter Kaufmann (ed.), The Portable Nietzsche (New York, New York: Viking Penguin Inc., 1982), p. 503.

In *The Antichrist*, written shortly thereafter, Nietzsche claimed that the division of humanity into three types was not an artificial social construct but was sanctioned by Nature itself.[288] In this context Nietzsche explicitly invoked Manu, the mythical Indian legislator and founder of the caste system. Nietzsche states that the three fundamental types are the spiritually superior, the physically superior, and the mediocre remainder. The highest type is identified with the priest and philosopher; the second type, "the noble warriors", consists of "the executive arm" of the ruling class.[289] The third group is almost a non-entity for Nietzsche, a miscellaneous servant class which exists only as the scaffolding for the elite. Nietzsche's praise of such a model helps to explain his interest in India. It is in India that the caste system to which Nietzsche appeals finds its most extreme expression.

Apart from Indian legislation, Nietzsche also became increasingly interested in Indian religion in the 1880s. In his early writings, however, Nietzsche displayed only a limited interest in Indian religion and exhibited far more of a penchant for Greek philosophizing, despite his youthful infatuation with the philosophy of Schopenhauer. Nietzsche chanced upon Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Representation* when he was twenty-one. He found Schopenhauer's philosophy immediately attractive and his interest was reinforced by his acquaintance with Wagner, who was at the time Schopenhauer's most famous, or infamous, disciple. Nietzsche revered Wagner and the ideas of the latter exercised a profound influence on the younger man's thought. But during the mid-1870s, the relationship between Nietzsche and Wagner became increasingly strained. As Nietzsche drifted away from Wagner, he simultaneously abandoned Schopenhauer.[290] His growing disgust at

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[288] Nietzsche, "The Antichrist," in Walter Kaufmann (ed.), The Portable Nietzsche (New York, New York: Viking Penguin Inc., 1982), p. 645.
[289] Ibid., pp. 645-646.
[290] R.J. Hollingdale, Nietzsche: The Man and His Philosophy (Revised Edition) (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 64.

Wagner's anti-Semitism manifested itself in a new understanding of European culture. In opposition to both Schopenhauer and Wagner, who thought that Jewish ideas had poisoned Europe, Nietzsche praised the Jews for preserving what was best in European culture from encroaching Oriental/Christian influences.[291]

Following his break with Wagner, Nietzsche suffered from a tendency to confound Indian religion and Schopenhauer's philosophy of pessimism. Writing in 1886, he proclaimed that his own philosophy was beyond good and evil while the philosophy of "the Buddha and Schopenhauer" yet remained "under the spell and delusion of morality".[292] At the time, Nietzsche continued to interpret Indian religions as being inherently life-negating. Despite their differences, such an interpretation was offered by both Hegel and Schopenhauer. Since Nietzsche's philosophy was explicitly life-affirming, or Dionysian, it is no surprise that he continually took issue not only with Schopenhauer but also with Buddhism and Hinduism. In *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche expressed his anxiety over the appearance of "a new Buddhism" in Europe; he warned that this "ever spreading morality of pity" was the "most sinister symptom" of declining European culture.[293]

Two years later, Nietzsche was of a far different opinion. In contrast to his previous judgment about the delusional morality of Buddhism, he described Buddhism as follows: "the self-deception of the moral concept lies far behind it. In my terms, its stands *beyond* good and evil."[294] Thus, while Nietzsche maintained his previous criticisms of Schopenhauer's pessimism, he came to look at Buddhism in a new light. By 1888, the last year in which Nietzsche produced significant written work, his opinion of Buddhism was more favourable than at any time previously. He

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[291]Nietzsche, Human, All Too Human, I, edited by Ernst Behler, translated by Gary Handwerk (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1995), pp. 258-259.
[292]Nietzsche, "Beyond Good and Evil," p. 258.
[293]Nietzsche, "On the Genealogy of Morals," p. 455.
[294]Nietzsche, "The Antichrist," p. 587.

had completely liberated himself from Schopenhauer's interpretation of Buddhism. In his autobiography, *Ecce Homo*, he refers to Buddha as a "profound physiologist", who offered not a moraline religion but rather a coldly rational system of "hygiene" in order to combat "*ressentiment*" and the accompanying dangers of physical/spiritual degeneration.[295] For Nietzsche, "*ressentiment*" is almost synonymous with Christianity. Therefore, Buddhism is not spiritually akin to Christianity as Schopenhauer contended but it is rather the cure for Christianity which is, according to Nietzsche, a disease as much as a religion ("sickness is of the essence of Christianity").[296] And while admitting that Christianity and Buddhism are both "nihilistic religions", Nietzsche is emphatic about their differences.[297] First and foremost, Buddhism originates among the highest classes. Christianity, on the contrary, is "a degeneracy movement composed of reject and refuse elements of every kind".[298] And in place of Christianity's superstitiousness, Nietzsche praises the rationality of Buddhism, "the only genuinely positivistic religion in history".[299]

The Antichrist is the work in which Nietzsche treats Indian religion most thoroughly. In attacking Christianity, he invokes Buddhism; in attacking democracy, he invokes Manu. In Nietzsche's hands, India becomes a foil to modern Europe whereby the deficiencies of the latter are illuminated. As Schopenhauer utilized Indian religion as a weapon to attack Judaism, so Nietzsche uses it to attack Christianity. In *The Antichrist* Nietzsche expresses the importance of Indological studies to his own philosophy when he states that "the critic of Christianity is profoundly grateful to the students of India."[300]

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[295]Nietzsche, "Ecce Homo," in Walter Kaufmann (ed.), Basic Writings of Nietzsche (New York, New York: Random House Inc., 2000), pp. 686-687.
[296]Nietzsche, "The Antichrist," p. 634.
[297]Ibid., p. 586.
[298]Nietzsche, The Will to Power, p. 96.
[299]Nietzsche, "The Antichrist," p. 587.
[300]Ibid., p. 586.

Nietzsche's praise of Indian religion in *The Antichrist* ought to be viewed with some reservation. For example, his notion that "perfection is the normal case" among practitioners of Buddhism is obviously suspect; it is also questionable whether Nietzsche himself even believed this statement.[301] It must be remembered that it is intended less to advance the cause of Buddhism than to belittle Christianity. In some passages of *The Antichrist*, Nietzsche's ire bursts forth in an almost feverish attack on Christianity. Greece, Rome, India, Islam, and even Judaism are all called forth in his relentless polemic against "the *anti-Aryan* religion par excellence".[302] In his struggle to exorcise Christianity from the West, Nietzsche disrupts the familiar equation of the Occident and Christendom; he forces modern Europeans to reassess the principles on which their culture is based; hence his project of a "revaluation of all values".[303]

According to Said, "what the Orientalist does is to *confirm* the Orient in his readers' eyes; he neither tries nor wants to unsettle already firm convictions".[304] Said's judgment may be applicable to those British and French figures whom he scrutinizes; it is most certainly not true of many German figures, including Nietzsche. Nietzsche, especially in his later writings, provides unconventional representations of Asiatic cultures which not only disrupt traditional notions of the Orient but challenge notions central to Occidental identity. This is apparent not only in his treatment of India but also in his portrayal of other non-European cultures, such as the Islamic world.

In *The Antichrist*, Nietzsche refers to three cultures which offered Europe the opportunity for cultural rebirth: the Classical World, Islam, and the Renaissance. It is

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[301] Ibid., p. 588.
[302] Nietzsche, "The Twilight of the Idols," p. 505.
[303] Nietzsche, "The Antichrist," p. 656.
[304] Said, Orientalism, p. 5

the appearance of the second of these three cultures, Islam, which is the most striking and would have been the most jarring for Nietzsche's readers. Nietzsche's inclusion of Islam simultaneously upsets the belief in Occidental superiority and Oriental difference. His elevation of Islam above the Classical World is noteworthy: "the wonderful world of the Moorish culture of Spain, really more closely related to *us*, more congenial to our senses and tastes than Rome and Greece".[305] He consequently goes on to praise the policies of Frederick II, which combined congeniality for Islam with antipathy to the Catholic Church. In regards to the crusades against Islam, he says that "the crusaders fought something before which they might more properly have prostrated themselves in the dust".[306] Nietzsche's praise of Islam is combined with an unrestrained attack on both Christianity and the Germans. His understanding of the Protestant Reformation perfectly contradicts the Hegelian interpretation.[307] Hegel's positive assessment of the role of the Germanic peoples in perpetuating the principles of Christianity is boldly inverted by Nietzsche: "If we do not get rid of Christianity, it will be the fault of the *Germans*."[308]

These representations of India, Islam, and Germany clearly indicate that Nietzsche's evaluations of non-European cultures not only incidentally touch on the problem of European identity; rather, they are deliberately meant to provoke an interrogation of it. His project of a "revaluation of all values" demands, first and foremost, a revaluation of traditional European values. In his task as legislator of future values, Nietzsche makes use of every means at his disposal to undermine those values which he despises. This is often the source of contradictions in his representations of other cultures. He does not provide a consistent cultural map but

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[305] Nietzsche, "The Antichrist," p. 652.
[306] Ibid., p. 652.
[307] Ibid., pp. 653-654.
[308] Ibid., p. 655.

rather challenges those of others. He disturbs his contemporaries' complacent visions of cultural difference and upsets traditional ideas of European identity. His resistance to facile cultural binarisms is pithily expressed in his assertion that "Orient and Occident are chalk lines drawn before our eyes in order to mock our timidity."[309]

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[309]Nietzsche, Unfashionable Observations, p. 173.

Part III

11. Epilogue

The representations of India in modern German philosophy are difficult to account for given Said's conception of Orientalism. Said's analysis of the power-knowledge nexus which sustains Orientalism and his deployment of the Foucauldian theory of discourse surely help to explain the conditions which made European representations of the East possible. But his analysis, in both *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism*, does not sufficiently address the diversity and divergences of these representations; moreover, the method which he employs is not well suited to account for such divergences since its focus on the privileged "*strategic location*" of the western observer obscures the conflicting principles around which western representations of the Orient have been organized.[310]

Said's portrayal of Orientalism as resting on a belief in the existence of an ontological difference between East and West is thus problematic. Certainly, many German intellectuals subscribed to the binarism to which Said refers. Among the major German philosophers, Hegel is the figure who drew this distinction most forcefully. Not only does a sharp distinction between Orient and Occident underlie his philosophy of history, but Hegel also explicitly adduces evidence in support of his thesis about Oriental difference. Likewise, Kant's theory of the superiority of the white race separates and privileges the Occident at the expense of the Orient. Marx's representation of the Orient is somewhat more problematic. Marx's revolutionary philosophy offers a method to politically challenge the existing European elite even as Marx subscribes to the selfsame elite's Eurocentric cultural prejudices about Oriental inferiority.

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[310]Said, Orientalism, p. 20.

Nevertheless, a number of German philosophers resisted the division which Said finds at the heart of Orientalism. Some, such as Schelling, merely stole brief glances at the East for insight and inspiration; others were more audacious. In strikingly different ways, Herder, Schlegel, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche upset the traditional division between East and West. Their ideas on race, language, religion, history, and politics made them open to the possibility of seeing cultural affinities between Europe and India. Herder's concept of *Humanität*, Schlegel's notion of an Indo-European linguistic family, Schopenhauer's philosophical pessimism, and Nietzsche's aristocratism were fundamental in shaping these figures' respective representations of non-European cultures. Said's depiction of Orientalism as a unified European discourse about the East suffers from serious omissions insofar as it neglects to account for the radical ways in which these intellectuals responded to India and other parts of the non-European world. Rather than accepting an unproblematic divide between Orient and Occident, these men provided complicated and idiosyncratic cultural maps.

The formation of these cultural maps was predicated upon a definition, whether clearly articulated or not, of culture and the related privileging of certain cultural characteristics. Those characteristics, or cultural nodes, which German philosophers thought were most important in defining their own culture (and their own philosophy) also found expression in the way in which they related to the cultures of others. It was in the discursive struggle generated at the sites of such nodes that links between cultures were forged and boundaries erected. It was a process which often had less to do with other cultures than with German philosophers' apprehension of their own. In this sense, the manner in which German philosophers defined their own culture determined the manner in which they defined all others.

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